Seirei Tsukai no Blade Dance Volume 3

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These are most of the illustrations in Volume 3:

【著者】

志瑞祐
しみず・ゆう

(゜∀゜)o彡゜ 黒タイツ！黒タイツ！
……すみません。あまりに素晴らしい表紙にまたとり乱してしまいました。おかげさまでコミカライズも大決定の『精霊使いの剣舞』、これからもどんどん加速していきますので、どうぞ応援よろしくお願いします！

第四回ＭＦ文庫Ｊライトノベル新人賞受賞。なごみ系ケルトコメディ『やってきたよ、ドルイドさん！』シリーズ、お城擬人化ファンタジー『白銀の城姫』シリーズを上梓。写真はメ切前にひとりマニアックなボードゲームで遊ぶ作者（現実逃避中）。

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さくら・はんぺん

4月6日生まれのゲーム原画家、イラストレーター。原画担当に『さくらビットマップ』（HOOKSOFT）など。
好きなことは絵を描くこと、睡眠。
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カバーイラスト／桜はんぺん　装丁／百足屋ユウコ（ムシカゴグラフィクス）

風の誓約

精霊使いの剣舞 ブレイドダンス 3

志瑞祐
Illustration
桜はんぺん

MF文庫 J

精霊使いの剣舞 ブレイドダンス 3
風の誓約
志瑞祐

MF文庫 J
し-04-09
MEDIA FACTORY
580

精霊使いの剣舞

ブレイドダンス

3

風の誓約

志瑞祐

Illustration

桜はんぺん

MF文庫J

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精霊使いの剣舞（ブレイドダンス）３　風の誓約

フィアナを仲間に加えたクレアたちは、間近に迫ったヴァレンティア聖祭の準備（媚薬とか裸チョコとか）に追われつつも、精霊剣舞祭（ブレイドダンス）への参加条件である学内ランキング上位三枠に着々と近づいていた。だがその前に、エリスの義姉にして、ランク一位の学園最強の存在――ヴェルサリア・イーヴァが立ちはだかる。さらに、カミトはエリスに乞われて風王騎士団（シルフィード）を手伝うことになるが、クレアはそれをこころよく思わないようで……!?　「エ、エリスの胸なんかにまんまと誘惑されて、騎士団の犬に成り下がったのね」「いや、そういうわけじゃ……」越えられぬ理想。かつて見た憧れ。そして、力への渇望の果てに待つものは――。エレメンタル・ファンタジー第３弾！

MF文庫J 志瑞祐の本

やってきたよ、ドルイドさん！ 1～3 [イラスト：絶叫]

白銀の城姫（ベルクフリート） 1～3 [イラスト：上田夢人]

精霊使いの剣舞（ブレイドダンス） 剣と学院と火猫少女
[イラスト：桜はんぺん]

精霊使いの剣舞（ブレイドダンス） 2 ロスト・クイーン
[イラスト：桜はんぺん]

精霊使いの剣舞（ブレイドダンス） 3 風の誓約
[イラスト：桜はんぺん]

風の誓約

精霊使いの剣舞3

ブレイドダンス

志瑞祐
Illustration
桜はんぺん

「カミト、私のチョコレートを
舐めてください」

「ふあぁっ、あ、あんた、契約精霊に
なんてこと教えてるのよ、へ、変態っ！」

Claire Rouge
クレア・ルージュ

エスト

「あ、んっ……な、なにするのよ！」

濡れ光る半透明の胴体が、
フィアナのスカートをめくりあげ、
華奢な身体にぎゅうぎゅうと
巻きついていく。
やわらかい胸が押しだされ、
喉から喘ぐような吐息が洩れる。

Fianna Ray Ordesia
フィアナ・レイ・オルデシア

「お、おまえ、いったい……」
カミトがごくりと唾を呑み込むと――

「い、いまから、私は君専用のメイドだ。
……い、いいな？」

Kazehaya Kamito
カゼハヤ・カミト

Ellis Fahrengart
エリス・ファーレンガルト

Seirei Tsukai no Blade Dance

3

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Prologue

3 years ago, at the Blade Dance match venue.

"My granddaughter, look closely at Velsaria's blade dance. Sooner or later you will also serve and carry the Empire's dignity on your back and will be fighting in the blade dance matches."

"Yes, grandfather."

Towards the old aged grandfather's — Duke Fahrengart's — words, the little girl nodded and replied with a dignified voice.

She had auburn colored pupils blessed with strong light and beautiful eyebrows that were sharply angled.

Her mesmerizing blue hair was tied in a ponytail.

She was a lovely girl that anyone would turn around to look at, but there was absolutely no coquetry or sweetness in her facial expression.

She had an atmosphere like the edge of a blade that could slice one with just a touch.

Ellis Fahrengart.

Her talent as an elementalist was revealed since childhood. It had been determined that starting as of next spring, she would attend the only elementalist training institute in the Ordesia Empire, the Areishia Elementalist Academy.

She was an elite candidate as a promising Empire Spirit Knight.

Ellis leaned forward from her seat and looked down at the arena right below.

Her soft breasts were touching and rubbing on the iron fence. Her recent worries were that compared to the other girls at the same age, her breasts were developing too much.

("Really.....Things like breasts just posses as a nuisance to swinging a sword.)

Regarding this topic, the girls around her were completely jealous, however—

For Ellis, who had totally no interest regarding love affairs, having huge breasts was simply an obstruction.

("......Something like love is pointless, I will become a knight. A splendid knight just like Aneue.")

Ellis strongly closed her fist, at that moment.

A loud cheer broke out in the arena.

From the West gate, the Ordesia Empire's representative elementalist had entered.

There was a girl with blonde hair that was beautiful like it had gathered and refined the radiance of the stars.

Delicately sculpted carvings decorated her silver armor.

Clothed in a red cloak, that appearance of hers was just like a general returning victoriously.

Velsaria Eva Fahrengart.

She came from a lower noble family that went into ruins in the Ranbal war. Anticipating her talent as an elementalist, she was adopted into the Fahrengart house, and became Ellis's two year older step-sister.

Even though she was a freshman from the Areishia Spirit Academy, she was chosen from among the elites gathered from many nations as a representative at the Blade Dance.

The fact that a freshman was chosen as the Blade Dance representative was unprecedented in the long history of the Areishia Spirit Academy.

With such a step-sister, Ellis' ideal image of a knight built up and she respected her from the depths of her heart.

She headed towards the middle of the stage. Then, from the east gate, her opponent elementalist appeared.

Having long black hair that extended to her hips, she had the foreign-styled attire with a large slit inserted at the edge of the pants.

Although having youthful features, she was so beautiful that even Ellis, despite being of the same gender, was taken back.

In her hands lay, contrary to her lovely appearance, an ominous darkness-colored sword.

"Grandfather, who is that girl?"

"Ren Ashbell, an independent elementalist."

"Independent.....not belonging to any country or organization. Is that what you're implying?"

"Yeah. It seems like there was the influence of a powerful person. It also seems like she's the same age as you, 13 years old."

"....."

Ellis bit her lips. Although having the same age, the fact that the girl was participating in the Blade Dance, was truly mortifying.

And then, the bell signalling the start of the match was rang.

The greatest Kagura offered to the Five Great Elemental Lords— the Blade Dance had begun.

Immediately Velsaria Eva's armor activated— and instantly shifted into battle form.

Sparkling particles of light constructed her composite armor. From both shoulders large twin-main cannons emerged.

That truly was the impregnable fortress that reigned over the lands.

Velsaria Eva's elemental waffe —Silent Fortress.

(.....What a contracted spirit. No, the one that should be praised is Aneue[1] the one using it.)

Velsaria's contracted spirit was an ancient sealed spirit that was sealed under a certain old castle.

On top of its ferocity, it was a sealed spirit that was said to be impossible for a normal elementalist to make a contract with.

And, she was able to perfectly control it.

Currently, Ellis could not even release the elemental waffe of her contracted spirit.

Just thinking about the ability difference between her and her target, also being her sister, she succumbed to feelings of shame.

(W-Will I be able to catch up behind Aneue.....)

Velsaria swung her hand up, —the main cannons on both her shoulders fired once.

She did not like a refined blade dance. She would always blast her utmost maximum firepower at her oncoming opponent—it was an extremely simple battle style.

There was an ear-splitting thunderous sound. In the arena, countless of pillars of fire's rose up.

It was over— not only Ellis, but thousands of the audience were sure about it.

But.

"Ehh?"

Ellis widely opened her eyes.

The cloud of dust cleared up and—

That black-haired girl's figure wasn't there.

(No way!?)

In that instant, a high-pitched metal-sound echoed.

Before anyone knew —the girl had moved to in front of Velsaria.

The demon sword of the girl with fluttering black hair stabbed through the Silent Fortress's composite armor.

Immediately, there was a black fog gushing out like blood spraying.

Having the armor destroyed, Velsaria slowly collapsed to the ground.

Silence arrived.

And then—

When the audiences finally noticed the situation, a break of cheers arose from where they were.

It was an unbelievable outcome. From the military based family, the Fahrengart Duke's knight was beaten by a young unnamed elementalist.

"....."

While Ellis was bewildered, the black haired girl that has beaten Velsaria was bewitching.

The elementalist that has beaten her respected sister—by all right, was supposed to be someone hated.

But, at that time what Ellis was embracing in her chest was a feeling opposite of hatred.

She was 13 years old. Although the girl was of the same age, she had shown her overwhelming power.

(Someday I too, just like her—)

A faint bud of admiration eventually became Ellis' clear goal and was carved into her heart.

Together with the name the Strongest Blade Dancer—Ren Ashbell.

Chapter 1: The Ojou-sama Who Woke Up Early

Part 1

Chirp chirp...

There was the chirping of singing birds. The fresh sunshine was shining in diagonally from the window.

"...U...n"

It was 6 o'clock, early in the morning. Kamito rubbed his sleepy eyes even though he had woken up.

He combed out his unkempt hair by hand, and then first he checked under the sheets as usual.

"Alright, today's safe."

Kamito took a breath of relief.

Recently, there were times when a fully naked sword spirit was sleeping with him, so he couldn't let his guard down.

Feeling relieved, he nimbly folded the sheets and got up.

"...I have to make breakfast."

The breakfast of Claire and the others, who were roommates, was expected to be made by Kamito every morning.

Well to begin with, he didn't hate cooking, and he was a freeloader, so he had no complaints.

"Toast with salad with bacon and eggs... Shall I specially throw in some boiled eggs today?"

After all, there was a team battle that they absolutely could not lose this morning. He wanted his two teammates and his partner sword spirit to eat something good whenever possible to restore their energy.

It has been one week since the quest at that Mine Town.

A new member was added into Team Scarlet.

She was the former second princess of the Ordesia Empire, as well as the «Divine Ritual Institute's» second ranking princess maiden.

Fianna Ray Ordesia.

Having been once called the Lost Queen, she was trying to ensnare Kamito and participate in the Blade Dance to regain the power of her spirit contract.

Eventually, she was able to regain the power of her spirit contract by her own strength, however, she continued to remain in the academy for some reason despite attaining her goal, and ended up joining Team Scarlet.

Claire had seemed displeased, but there were already only several weeks left till the Blade Dance, so she reluctantly ushered her into the team.

It was different from the individual matches three years ago, this time's Blade Dance was a team battle. Unless they gathered five teammates, they could not even get the qualifications to participate. Besides, the true strength of Fianna, who regained the power of her spirit contract, was something that even Claire could not help but recognize.

She, who was from the Queen training organization—«Divine Ritual Institute», had definitely not received any battle training, but she could provide various combat support by dancing ritual Kagura.

Also, her contracted spirit «Georgios» was a knight spirit of «defense» specialty, something Kamito and the others were weak at. Because she joined, the resulting balance in the team greatly increased in its sense of stability.

There was also the achievement of the S rank quest at Mine Town. And then, there were the successive victories of the inter-school battles.

Team Scarlet's inter-school ranking was now increasing with great momentum.

If they kept up this pace, it would no longer be just be a dream to overtake Ellis' Team, which was currently in third place.

"All that's left is for those two to be on a little better terms with each other."

He shrugged his shoulders in disappointment as he faced the kitchen—

"Hn?"

The clattering sound of tableware came from the kitchen.

And then, there was a rich sweet smell that came wafting over. It had a slightly burnt, bitter scent.

(Is this smell... by any chance, chocolate?)

Kamito frowned, and softly approached with stealthy steps.

Through the gap of the door, he carefully peered into the kitchen—

"Hey, what are you putting in!?"

"Fufuu, something that is made of mashed-up baked newt♪"

He heard Claire and Fianna's voices.

"Wh-What are you thinking?! Don't put in such a disgusting thing!"

"Ahh, I was usually using it at the Divine Ritual Institute. It seemed to have the same effect as an aphrodisiac."

"Ap-Aphrodisiac!?"

"Yes, if Kamito-kun ate this, even his true nature as the demon king of the night would appear, and he may come attacking in the middle of the night."

"At-Attack... wh-what on earth would he do?"

"Well... that is already something indecent to the extent that he could be said to have been bewitched."

"Be-Bewitched... y-you're lying, even for him, such a thing—"

"Furthermore, the two of us together."

"The two of us together!?"

"It isn't surprising for Kamito-kun to do at least that."

"Wh-Wh-What a guy... Un-Unforgivable, that pervert, cinders, cinders!"

As her voice trembled, there was the *pashin* *pashin* sound of something being hit by a whip.

(Those two...)

Kamito's temple twitched.

...Somehow, he felt that they were defaming his honor with staggering vigor.

(...Speaking of that, when did I become the demon king of the night?)

Even while Kamito was bearing this outrageous treatment, the two ojou-sama had continued their conversation.

"Fufuu, however, isn't it nice to also have Kamito-kun in an overbearing demon king mode once in a while?"

"Th-That's... Err, a-at any rate, that's a no. Putting in such a dubious thing. What are you going to do if his stomach is destroyed before the battle?"

"Oh, Claire you're no different. Do you plan on making him eat those burnt, black cinders?"

"Sh-Shut up..."

(...Cinders?)

Kamito peered into the kitchen, and a lump of something black had turned into a pile on top of the plate .

Coals for stove-use...they didn't seem like them.

"Really, the nickname of hellcat girl is not for show. After all, you turned everything into cinders."

"...I don't want to be told that by the fake breast princess."

"Oh, even without my pads mine are much bigger than yours, Claire, you know?"

"I-I want to try burning every surplus fat of those, princess."

Sparks scattered between the two of them. ...How energetic early in the morning.

It somehow had become a critical situation, so—

"Hey, what are the two of you doing?"

Kamito, finally, made an appearance in the kitchen.

"Fua, Kamito!?" "Kamito-kun!?"

The two of them turned around in a shocked manner, and hid something behind them in a fluster.

"Y-You've already awoken!?"

"Yeah, because we've a battle today. I planned on making breakfast earlier than usual—"

Then, Kamito unintentionally stopped his words.

His eyes were being rooted at Claire's appearance, whom he was facing.

"Y-You, that appearance..."

"Wh-What...? If it doesn't match me, then, how about saying that honestly?"

Claire's cheeks reddened, as she quickly turned away.

Her red twin-tail hair slightly swayed.

Her clear ruby pupils. Her lovely flower-bud-like cherry blossom lips on her smooth white skin.

Her breasts' bulge was definitely gently-sloping, but that proportion was more than charming.

If it was just her physical appearance, she was a top-class beautiful girl among all the beautiful girls within Areishia Spirit Academy.

Furthermore, Claire was currently not in her usual uniform, which he had become used to seeing.

She was very lovely, putting on an apron attached with frills.

Towards this vexing thing... He really ended up feeling dizzy for a moment.

Her small cap suited her small build, this was also unfairly lovely.

Kamito raised up both his hands like he gave up.

"No, It suits you very well. ...You're cute."

"...Wh-Wha-What are you saying, idiot, idiot, idiot, idiot!"

Gaaa...!

Claire's face increasingly turned red, and she was hitting Kamito's chest.

"Eh, Kamito-kun... What about me?"

Fianna slightly held her index finger to her mouth, and said, seemingly displeased.

She was wearing an apron, that was a matching set with Claire's, over her black dress-style uniform.

Her glamorous hair reached out to her waist. Her cleavage was deep, which he looked down into the chest area of her uniform.

Her dim colored pupils, which were fringed with lovely eyelashes, were extolling a mysterious light somewhere.

The former princess, Fianna, was also an evenly balanced beautiful girl as Claire.

"...Do I have to say it?"

"It's something girls would be happy when you earnestly put it into words."

Fianna giggled mischievously.

Kamito sighed in resignation.

"You're pretty, Fianna... Eh, what are you making me say in the morning?!"

"Fufu, Kamito-kun, you're surprisingly *that*, aren't you ?"

"Aren't you the one who made me say it..."

With a deadpan look, Kamito glared at Fianna, who was giggling mischievously—

"By the way, what are you two doing? What are you hiding behind you?"

"Th-That's..."

Claire's and Fianna's faces swiftly turned red, and they bashfully entwined their fingers.

"Uh?"

Kamito frowned and pressed on—

"...Cho-Chocolate!"

Claire shouted like she turned defiant.

"Chocolate? Did you wake up to make candy or something?"

"W-Well, something like that. You know, isn't it « Valentia Holy Festival» very soon. Therefore, err, we're practicing... D-Don't misunderstand, I'll let you at least sample it, but that's all!"

—Valentia Holy Festival.

It was a popular ritual to commemorate the Queen Valentia Sadelca, who served the fire Elemental Lord several hundred years ago.

It was originally a ritual to dedicate baked sweets, which were baked by flames of purification, to spirits but — it had become "the day to give chocolate to the opposite sex, who one had a liking for" among the common masses.

"Hn? The opposite sex... But, there should only be girls in this academy—"

Kamito pointed out—

"Th-That's obvious, this is a friendship chocolate to be given to friends! Your role is just to sample it. Geez, what are you expecting? It's like you're a gluttonous pig!"

Claire talked on and on with her face bright red.

"...How mean. Wait a minute, don't you have no friends at all?"

"I-I do, things like friends! For example, Scarlet, and ... errr, the stray cat staying in the academy's garden, Kitty."

"...I'm sorry, I was in the wrong."

...It seemed like he ended up stepping on a land mine.

"A-Anyway, hey, since I made them with great trouble , be grateful and eat them!"

Claire said in anger, and thrust that cinder lump before Kamito.

"Uh... Do I have to eat... this?"

"Wh-What... I woke up early to make it, you know!"

"No, I'm certainly thankful for that, but ..."

"Kamito-kun, forget those cinders, you can eat my chocolate."

Fuyon.

"Fianna!?"

Suddenly, the former princess, who expressed an impish smile, was pressing her soft breasts against him.

Even without things like pads, her breasts were big enough, and a heart shaped chocolate was squeezed into her cleavage.

It was different from Claire's cinders, this one had an edible appearance, but he couldn't let himself be fooled. This impish princess had, in a certain sense, the cooking ability of a greater killing-level than Claire.

(...Just now, they said something about an aphrodisiac.)

"Kamito, quickly eat my chocolate!"

"Hey, don't hinder my Kamito-kun madly in love plan!"

As they jostled together, the two of them held out their chocolates.

"No, err, having such sweet things in the morning is..."

Kamito retreated, overwhelmed.

At that moment.

Suddenly, the living room's door opened—

"Kamito, I also tried making chocolate."

"E-Est!?"

The one who appeared was a lovely beautiful girl like a snow fairy.

Her brilliantly shining silver hair. Her tight milk-like white smooth skin.

And then, her clear violet pupils that confined a faint brilliance.

She was the sword spirit Est.

She was a sealed spirit, who made a contract with Kamito several weeks ago, and possessed exceedingly mighty power.

"..."

Kamito widened his eyes, and became stiff like he was frozen.

Claire and Fianna were also at a loss for words.

She was naked. Stark naked.

Est, who was in an appearance almost akin to that of a new-born, was simply standing there.

(Almost) referred to the fact that she was wearing black knee socks on her legs, but—

That appearance, which was called naked knee-socks[2] in slang, was in a certain way even more lascivious than being naked.

"Est, that's a crime."

"Is Est a crime?"

Est tilted her head to the side in wonder.

"...Yes, Est is a naughty criminal."

Kamito was in chaos and had blurted out something he didn't really understand.

"That's disappointing. I thought that Kamito would be delighted with this sort of appearance."

"What kind of eyes are you looking at your contractor with..."

Kamito deeply sighed with a deadpan look.

"And, what do you mean that Est also made chocolate?
"

He could not see anything like chocolate in Est's hands
.

Instead, she was holding a small tube made of cloth.

It was something that was often used for decorating things like cakes.

"Okay, over here."

Est nodded expressionlessly—

Nyururun

"Wh—"

What, she began drawing words with chocolate on her smooth white skin!

"..."

Nyuru nyurun. *Nyuruuruurun.*

There was liquid chocolate freely surging out.

Drawn on her pure white virgin-snow-like soft skin were words written in the sacred language of the spirits.

When deciphered— they read "**Eat me**".

"E-Est!?"

The moment Kamito understood the meaning of the spirit language, his face turned bright red.

"Fuaa, y-you, what are you teaching your contracted spirit, pe-pervert !"

"Err... Kamito-kun, y-you like this sort of thing?"

Claire's face turned bright red, and she flew into a rage , and Fianna had a-little-drawn-back look on her face.

"Wait, you're misunderstanding! Hey, Est—"

"Kamito, please lick my chocolate."

The naked Est was walking with a chocolate smeared appearance.

That appearance of hers, which he peeked at through the gaps of his fingers covering his eyes, was so alluring that his heart spontaneously jumped up.

"...If you don't hurry, it'll melt."

"No, hey, wait—"

Dotadotadotadotaa!

Suddenly, he heard intense footsteps from the corridor .

Bam. The room's door was cleanly opened with force —

"Kazehaya Kamito, what on earth are you doing... Wh!?"

The one, who showed up, was—

A female knight, wearing azure light armor over her body.

She had frigid reddish brown pupils. Her rose-colored lips were tightly closed.

Her stunning blue hair was tied up in a ponytail with a ribbon.

She was the captain of the Sylphid Knights that managed the academy's public morals.

Ellis Fahrengart.

The moment she came bursting into the room, she opened her reddish brown eyes widely.

"Y-You... H-H-How shameless..."

"Wa-Wait, Ellis, you're mistaken, there's no way this is my hobby—"

"How unsightly, are you thinking that such an excuse would work?!"

Gogogogogogogo...!

Thunderous fierce gales blew violently around Ellis, whose eyebrows were raised.

She was a top-class wind spirit user even within the academy.

"I received a report that your room was noisy and came to see, but... I never thought that you were making your contracted spirit do such a perverted thing!"

The whirling gales mowed down the room's furniture and soon transformed into the form of a giant demon bird.

It was the high ranking demon wind spirit— «Simorgh » that served the Fahrengart family.

"Des-Despite that I had gotten a better opinion of you!"

It was certain that tears were slightly oozing around Kamito's eyes.

"E-Ellis, you're mis—"

"It's no use, be turned into paella[3] right here and now !"

Kouu!

She aimed and released a lump of fierce gale winds at Kamito.

Kamito's body was blown off in a straight line, and it smashed into the room's window and danced in midair.

Part 2

Areishia Spirit Academy.

It was a development school that trained noble girls, who were gathered from all over the empire, into fully fledged elementalists.

The school building was like a fortress, furnished with solid ramparts. This academy, which included the continent's largest «Spirit Forest» and Mine Town within its vast territory, was just like a small independent country.

"...Sigh, he doesn't change, that boy."

As she looked down at the boy's appearance of fluttering in midair from the second floor of the dormitory—

The Academy's headmistress, Greyworth Ciel Mais, made a small sigh.

Her ash-blonde hair was gently waving. Her grey pupils extolled sharp discernment.

She definitely could only be seen as a bewitchingly beautiful lady from her outward appearance, but she was once the head knight of the twelve-knight-commanders Numbers that were boasted as the empire's strongest.

During the Ranbal war, she was the legendary elementalist, the Dusk Witch that both friends and foes feared.

"Even though there's only a few weeks till the opening of the Blade Dance, how carefree."

They seemed to have added the former second princess, Fianna, into their team and were gradually raising their ranking, but— they still had not gathered five teammates.

"Nevertheless—"

The figure of a person appeared from Greyworth's shadow.

"Calamity Queen's sister with former second princess who lost her Queen qualification. Even within my superior problem child gathering class, they are a very peculiar group."

It was a woman with black hair and a white robe put over her suit.

Spirit Contractor—Freya Grandol. Raven Class' teacher-in-charge.

"Headmistress, you seem to be pretty attached to him."

"That's right, after all, he's the one and only male elementalist in the continent."

Freya turned a strict gaze towards Greyworth, who shrugged her shoulders to dodge the question.

"Kazehaya Kamito... Who on earth is he?"

"Oh, did you also fall in love with that boy?"

"Sorry, but I do not have an interest in younger ones."

Freya shook her head, and Greyworth smiled, seemingly happy.

"Hmm... So, what information do you have for me?"

"We caught hold of information that the traders of Corpse Federation (Murders) sneaked into Academy Town. They're probably trying to sell curse-binding seals to students just before the Blade Dance."

"What an annoying bunch. Order Ellis' Sylphid Knights to reinforce the security."

"Yes, there's another thing—"

"Uh?"

"Velsaria Eva has returned to the academy."

Greyworth slightly raised up her eyebrows.

"Haa, she completed the subjugation quest of a devil-class spirit in just a few weeks. As expected."

"Yea, she is without a doubt the **academy's strongest elementalist** at this point in time— So far, she had been doing the quests completely without assembling a team, but she would also have to recruit members to participate in the Blade Dance. She seems to be someone who would be at the top amongst the three participating. "

"Well, I wonder about that?"

Greyworth smiled, seemingly amused, as she glanced towards the outside of the window.

Kamito was over there, being chased by Ellis' demon wind spirit and was frantically running from place to place.

Chapter 2: Team Scarlet's Dash

Part 1

"Kamito, they're coming. Let's break through the middle in one go!"

"Ah, I got it!"

Simultaneously with the match-commencement bell—

Kamito and Claire began running through the forest of Astral Zero.

It was a simulation practice targeting the Blade Dance, and their third battle after Fianna had joined.

They were taking a battle formation where the vanguard were Kamito and Claire, and the rear guard and commander was Fianna.

This time there was no need to incapacitate all five members of the opposing team, they had to defeat one person that was chosen to be the commander. It was Claire's judgment that it would make best use of the

team's offensive ability if Fianna was posted as the rear guard and defending as the commander, instead of Claire, who would be fighting as a vanguard.

"Haa, haa... Hey, wait a bit, you two!"

Fianna ran as she gasped. For her, who had not received battle training, running also seemed tough.

"The rate of your breathing is increasing, princess."

"I can't help it, after all, my breasts aren't light like Claire's—"

"Wh-What was that...!"

Seeing Fianna's breasts shake whenever she ran, Claire tightly bit her lips.

"Hey, don't quarrel. —They're coming!"

Upon coming out from the deep forest and into an open area— Kamito shouted.

There were shadows of three elementalists in the front. It seemed like they were going to clash head on.

Claire returned to her serious face, kicked the ground, and further accelerated.

Their opponent, «Team Aquans», was ranked seventh in the interschool ranking.

It was a team that mainly constituted of powerful people gathered from the upperclassmen. They couldn't let their guard down.

Looking at the approaching opponents— Claire gasped in surprise.

Out of the approaching three people, she recognized the faces of two.

"Those two, if I recall—"

Kamito also noticed it.

They were the demon mirror elementalist and the adamantine elementalist.

A few weeks ago, they were the same upperclassmen, who had participated in the contract ritual of the militarized spirit in Academy Town.

They were the ones, who had relentlessly tormented Claire, who could not use her contracted spirit.

After that, they had the tables turned on them by Scarlet, who was possessed by the frenzy spirit, but—

Before he knew, they seemed to have joined a champion team.

"...Three from the front, huh? The remaining two should be hiding in the forest."

"I'll gather and take them on. You get the ones in the forest."

"Will you be alright?"

"Don't look down on me."

Kamito returned a wry smile to Claire, who expressed a composed smile.

"I'm going to settle it in 30 seconds."

"I'm counting on you— Scarlet!"

At the same time as Claire shouted, the incandescence hellcat running beside her changed its appearance into Flame Tongue.

It was—the incarnation of a contracted spirit that transformed into an armament—an elemental waffe. There was no one, who could release this as an elementary student.

Claire swung the Flame Tongue to the side.

The red hot whip was running as it licked the ground, and a blazing wall of flames appeared.

As the three attackers from the opposite team flinched, Kamito took the chance to quickly dash into the forest.

He cut down many trees with his shiny-silver elemental waffe sword as he ran through.

His field of vision was bad due to the drifting mist. He sharpened his whole body's senses, and sensed the presence of divine power, which was the source of the power of an elementalist— a battle ability driven into him when he was young at the «Instructional School».

(—One is coming this way.)

He felt the presence behind him. One of the three seemed to be chasing after Kamito.

He tried to stop and turn around, and at that moment.

Vun— A sound like the flapping of a bug's wings skimmed past his earlobes.

The attack he had just barely dodged pulverized the tree behind him.

(What? I didn't see the trajectory of that attack—)

He turned towards the direction of the sound— There was the figure of the furious attacker.

It was a small built girl with chestnut-color hair. She was holding a small harp in her hand.

It was a musical-instrument-type elemental waffe.

The girl strummed the harp— and a slash attack was released again.

The invisible sound blade cut Kamito's leg and the many tree leaves fluttered and scattered in a flash.

It was a rather troublesome elemental waffe. It differed from a normal shooting attack, since he could not observe the shooter's hand movement and gaze to predict the trajectory.

(—In that case, I'll close in and bring her down in one attack!)

He ignored the elementalist chasing him behind. Holding the sword horizontally, Kamito rushed straight in.

The chestnut-colored hair girl violently strummed her harp. Perhaps she was flustered by Kamito's approaching speed, the invisible blades were released towards an almost random direction.

(No, this is—)

Kamito noticed his opponent's aim.

In the following moment, the sound blades that should have been out of range simultaneously rained incessantly on him from behind.

"...!"

The academy's uniform that had stab-proof features was cut and ripped, and intense pain attacked Kamito's whole body.

Even if he received an attack from a spirit in Astral Zero, his physical flesh would never receive damage, but that didn't mean that the sensation of pain completely vanished.

"You've let your guard down, male elementalist!"

There was a scorning-like voice from behind. It was the elementalist that came chasing after Kamito.

Upon turning around, there was the upperclassman smirking with a sphere-shaped spirit floating on her palm.

"I see, you amplified the sound blades and reflected them, huh? ..."

The reflection of attribute attacks was the demon mirror spirit's special trait.

It was a combination attack utilizing their spirits' compatibility—as expected, they were accustomed to battle.

"Vit, that guy's elemental waffe is a sword. It's no big deal as long as we keep our distance."

The harp girl silently nodded. They seemed to be planning to pincer attack him and bring him down for sure.

(...They have analyzed my battle strengths, huh?)

Terminus Est was an elemental waffe of the strongest class, but since she was a sword, she could only do close-range attacks.

Also, Kamito couldn't use powerful spirit magic like Claire.

The handling of spirit magic was something necessary for the systematic research relating to the spirit subject, but Kamito was of «Instructional School» origin and thus he didn't receive practically any training in that area.

However, if they were under the impression that Kamito's long distance attack measures were nonexistent, they were mistaken.

"Est!"

As she heard Kamito's shouting voice, the elemental waffe metamorphosed.

From a single-edged long sword, into a beautiful short sword attached with an ornament.

At that moment, there were the countless sound blades , released from both sides.

The moment he dodged them, Kamito threw the short sword.

Perhaps because she didn't think he would throw his elemental waffe, the sound elementalist had a surprised facial expression.

The short sword hit and was sucked into her chest.

In Astral Zero, a contracted spirit could be used as the incarnation of pure divine power.

There were no injuries on her pierced chest, yet she lost consciousness in an instant and shouldn't even have the time to feel the pain.

At the same time, Kamito was running.

He extracted the short sword from the fainted girl, and at the same time he turned around, he repelled the sound blades that came attacking from behind. He poured divine power into the short sword, and restored Est to the previous long sword— Realizing the failure of that attack, the demon mirror elementalist tried to plot her escape, but that was too late of a reaction.

"Sorry, the short sword is more of my specialty."

The glowing silver sword pierced through the demon mirror spirit all together with the upperclassman.

Upon confirming that the two had fainted, and quickly returning to the location where Claire was fighting—

"You're late, seven seconds late."

"You were counting? You're such a stingy fellow."

Within the whirling crimson flames, Claire was dancing a splendid blade dance.

There were the remains of the melted crag spirit rolling on the ground— She seemed to have already defeated one person.

The one remaining was the adamantine elementalist. As she parried the spirit, which had taken on its gigantic ore form, away with her whip, Claire was making walls of flame to seal her opponent's movement. The blazing flames totally did not weaken. On the contrary, fanned by the thunderous violent-blowing wind, they seemed to be increasingly growing hotter.

It was the assistive effect of the ritual dance performance that Fianna danced. The power of the wind Elemental Lord was fiercely stirring up the flames.

However, the opponent was an adamantine spirit, which possessed resistance against the fire attribute. It was acting as if the walls of flame were nothing.

"Your flame spirit won't work on my «Adamantine»!"

The adamantine spirit came assaulting straight on. Claire kicked the ground and jumped.

That appearance of her red twin tails flying and fluttering seemed almost as if they were scattering sparks .

The crimson killing flash freely tore through the sky. The surrounding trees were cut from their roots.

No. The ones cut weren't just the trees of the forest.

Perhaps it was unable to withstand the accumulation of damage any longer; he thought that he heard a metal-scraping-like sound as the adamantine spirit in its ore form was cleanly split into four and fell to the ground .

"No way, my adamantine spirit!?"

"Certainly, the adamantine spirit has a resistance against the fire attribute. However, it seemed to be brittle against a cutting attack."

Claire landed on the ground, and brushed her red twintails.

Jumping and scattering sparks landed into a puddle and made a sizzling sound.

"...**A puddle?**"

Kamito, who had been fascinated by Claire's blade dance, suddenly frowned.

It was just behind Fianna, who was performing the ritual dance.

(Just now, there wasn't a puddle at such a—)

At that moment.

"—Kyaa!?"

Fianna screamed.

Suddenly, her body was caught by a giant shadow that appeared from the inside of the puddle.

It had a big slimy transparent frame and ominously shiny red eyes.

And then, it had a large spread out chin.

That was a water spirit in a giant serpent form.

"Fianna!"

"Ah, hn... What are you doing?!"

Its wet shiny semi-transparent body turned over Fianna's skirt, and was tightly twining around her slender body. Her tender breasts were squeezed out and a gasping-like breath leaked out from her throat.

Fianna was suspended in midair as she writhed, but she was helpless against the spirit opponent.

"No, no, don't touch anywhere, eh... n-noooooo!"

"Why you, release Fianna!"

Aiming at the slimy coiling serpent's body, Claire launched her Flame Tongue.

However, the Flame Tongue made a sizzling noise and slipped though the semi-transparent body.

It was a water spirit, which had the worst compatibility with Scarlet, which was a flame spirit. Even within the five grand elemental spirits, it was the spirit

that Claire wanted to not deal with the most. Furthermore, a spirit that took on a beast form was a high ranking spirit. That was probably the commander's contracted spirit— but there were no signs of the elementalist using it around.

"Damn—"

Kamito was about to run to her side, and at that moment.

The water spirit raised its head, aimed at Claire and released a strong Aqua Breath.

Claire knocked down the water bullets with her Flame Tongue, but she simply couldn't defend against all of them—

"Claire!"

Kamito quickly changed his direction, grabbed Claire's body, and jumped.

Immediately after that, countless water bullets had made their impact. Large explosions, as if turning the ground inside out, occurred in succession.

"..., An attack-type water spirit? What power."

"Fuaa, Ka-Kamito, what are you doing?!"

Don, they landed on the ground, and Claire turned bright red and shouted.

It seems that being carried in his arms made her embarrassed.

"I-I got it! I got it, so don't scratch my face!"

The moment Claire was softly let off onto the ground, the water spirit turned around.

Raising its head, it tried to release its strong Aqua Breath again.

At that moment, a dazzling flash surged out from the serpent's body.

——Thou, servant of the king of the child of man, knight and master swordsman!

——By the contract of the old blood, become the sword that protects me, please hurry and come to my side!

In the instant when the tightening jolted, Fianna took the chance to recite the spirit summoning incantation.

Immediately, the gigantic water spirit's body swelled up and exploded in one go from the inside.

The one appearing from within the flash was—

An armored knight, carrying Fianna in one hand.

It had a rigid silver heavy-armor. Its red eyes were glaringly shining in its helmet.

It was the knight spirit «Georgios»— The contracted spirit that served the Ordesia royal family for generations .

It was power that Fianna, who was once called the Lost Queen, had regained.

Fianna was gently let down and collapsed on the ground since she had exhausted all her strength.

"Checkmate"

Kamito calmly informed, and pointed the tip of the sword at the middle of the puddle.

"...It seems this is it."

The commander water elementalist, who was hiding, admitted defeat, seemingly vexed.

Part 2

Kamito and the others, who returned from the forest of Astral Zero, were walking in a line in the academy's corridor.

Fianna, who had been caught and twined up by the water spirit, had a dead-tired expression.

Est, who turned back into her human form, was slightly pinching on the cuffs of Kamito's uniform.

"This makes it our third consecutive victory in our battles, this is all thanks to my wonderful commands."

Brushing her red twin-tails, Claire muttered in a good mood.

"I won't deny it, but... today's match was a little too much of a close call."

Kamito shrugged his shoulders and pointed out.

Although, winning against the seventh ranking team was great. With this, they should have come within reach of the top three, who were able to get the participating qualification of the Blade Dance.

"That's right, we can't feel relieved yet. As far as the top ranking team we have not yet fought with is concerned, the possibility that we'll get Ellis' third ranking team next is high."

"Ellis?... I'll want to seriously cross swords with her once."

Ellis' blade dance was, completely without things like tricks, a fair and square knight's blade dance.

If it was her, he was sure that he could surely fight feeling good.

Claire somehow pouted her lips, seemingly displeased , at Kamito muttering such things.

"Wh-What, you want to see Ellis' breasts shaking so much?"

"What... Well, certainly, Ellis' breasts are big, but— Ah, no."

As Claire was sternly glaring, Kamito averted the topic in a fluster.

"Although, if I recall Ellis' team had two comrades who're still injuried, right?"

They were the Sylphid Knights' Rakka and Reishia. They, who were also Ellis' teammate, fought Jio Inzagi in the quest the other day and were injured.

It was certain to take fair amount of time for the two of them to return to the academy.

"Yeah, in the case that Ellis defaults— we may have to fight against the second ranking team, or the first ranking's Velsaria. Honestly, it's not very appealing."

"Velsaria?"

"A knight of the Fahrengart duke family. Taking on the nickname of Silent Fortress, she's the academy's strongest elementalist."

The instant Claire spoke of that nickname, her voice slightly trembled.

"The academy's strongest..."

She was first in the inter-school rankings. She was the academy's strongest elementalist that even Claire feared.

What kind of opponent was she?—

(Hn? However, the Fahrengart duke family was certainly...)

Suddenly, Kamito seemed to have recalled something, but—

"Well, in any case—"

To shake off the heavy atmosphere, Claire tightly thrust out her index finger.

"Let's have lunch or something. A victory celebration party to celebrate our consecutive victories."

"It's still before noon. You'll grow fat if you overeat."

"An elementalist, who exhausted her divine power in battle, would not grow fat."

Placing her hands at her waist, Claire swelled out her cheeks sullenly.

"So, the nutrition that should go to your breasts were all taken by your contracted spirit. How pitiful."

"Eh?"

Hearing Fianna's murmuring—

Claire was taken aback, and looked down at the hellcat spirit near her feet.

"...Hey, Scarlet."

"Nya?"

"By any chance, are you burning my breasts' fat?"

Gogogogogogogo...!

"Nya,nya,nyaa, nyaaa!"

"Ah, hey, wait up!"

Scarlet shook its head, and escaped at full speed through the corridor.

(...Umm, I somewhat feel a sense of affinity to Scarlet.)

Kamito was thinking of such things, when—

Kuikui. The sleeve of his uniform was pulled from behind.

Turning around, Est was gazing at Kamito with her clear violet pupils.

"Kamito, Est is hungry."

"Ahh, Est, as you have really done your best, you can eat the things you like."

"Okay, Kamito. Please praise Est more."

"...It can't be helped."

Surisuri. *Nadenade*.

He made a wry smile as he gave her head a pat, and Est partly closed her eyes, seemingly feeling good.

"... Y-You, why are you soft on Est?"

"What, Claire, do you also want to be patted?"

"Wh... There's no... Fuan"

Kamito placed his other hand on Claire's head, and she made a somewhat cute voice.

Upon patting her head, she became docile almost like a cat, which was fondled at its throat.

(Th-This is a little cute...)

Kamito was also unconsciously startled at the hellcat girl's unexpected weak point.

"Mmm, Kamito-kun, are you not going to pat me?"

Holding her index finger at her mouth, Fianna muttered seemingly lonely.

Then.

"—Hmm, you seem to be having fun. Sister of the Calamity Queen."

A cold voice was heard from behind.

"...?"

Upon turning around—

"Even though, the truth is you don't have things like the qualifications to be in this academy."

"Do you get what your sister did to the empire?"

It was the upperclassman from the match a while ago — those two, the adamantine elementalist and the demon mirror elementalist.

"What did you—"

Kamito grabbed and stopped Claire's arm, who was enraged.

"Claire, calm down. Don't easily fall for their provocations."

"..., But Nee-sama was insulted.!"

"If you cause a dueling uproar here, our participation in the Blade Dance will also be in jeopardy."

Kamito whispered, and Claire thoroughly bit her lips, seemingly frustrated.

If they receive a punishment for a dueling uproar, the ranking that they raised with great trouble would end up being drastically reduced.

The two of them in front of him also knew that and were provoking Claire on purpose.

(Those two...)

Although, even Kamito also couldn't stay composed.

It was for only an instant, but Kamito didn't miss Claire's hurt expression. The matter about her sister, Rubia Elstien, had been a great emotional scar to her.

"This is really sickening. For the sister of a felon, who did that much, to be boldly attending the academy, what on earth are your nerves made of—"

"Hey, you better—"

Kamito tried to complain, and at that moment.

Katsun— Elegant footsteps were heard in the corridor.

"Hmm, how disgraceful, seniors. We, the academy students, are empire nobles with pride. If you have a pretext, it is manners to settle it with an official duel."

Her extravagant platinum-blonde hair fluttered up.

She had the conduct of a noble that was perfectly in order up to her fingertips.

"...Rinslet?"

Yes—

The one, who was slowly walking from the other side of the corridor, was a blond haired beautiful girl overflowing with elegance.

She was the eldest daughter with the lineage of the honorable Laurenfrost family, and also the self-declared rival of Claire.

She was Miss Rinslet Laurenfrost.

Her emerald green pupils, which hid faint brilliance, were fearlessly glaring at the two upperclassman.

"Or perhaps, rural nobles, like you seniors, do not even happen to have that extent of pride?"

"..., What was that!?"

Being provoked, one of the enraged upperclassmen summoned her adamantine spirit.

(Danger—)

Kamito rushed out in front to try to protect Rinslet, but —

"—You're slow."

"Wh!?"

The upperclassman distorted her face in shock.

Rinslet's nocked demon bow of ice was certainly aimed at the place between her eyebrows.

It was the high ranking demon ice spirit «Fenrir's» elemental waffe— Freezing Arrow.

"The one, who moved first, was you seniors. Therefore, this is a proper self-defense. Although, it seemed that I, who moved later, was somehow faster."

"..., Ridiculous, you released your elemental waffe in an instant!?"

The upperclassman stiffened as the aim was kept affixed between her eyebrows.

Honestly, the releasing speed just now astonished even Kamito.

"It is wiser for you to give up. It is faster for me to release my arrow— Or perhaps, you planned on competing with this ice demon Rinslet here?"

"...Y-You'll remember this."

Seemingly frustrated, the two upperclassmen said disdainfully and glared at Claire before running in the end.

"Hmm, a wise judgment."

Rinslet proudly brushed her hair, and kept her elemental waffe bow.

"Rinslet, you..."

"Oh, this is not something you have to feel indebted for, Claire Rouge. I really hate those sort of prideless nobles."

"I-It's not like I feel indebted or something!"

"Claire, don't be bothered by those kind of people."

"I-I'm not... That sort of thing is normal."

Claire rubbed her eyes, and quickly turned away.

"B-By the way, everyone—"

"Ahem", Rinslet coughed.

"Um?"

"E-Err... Just now, I heard something about a victory celebration party."

Her face was slightly red. Her appearance, where she was frigid, suddenly changed, and she entwined her fingers bashfully, as her line of sight was wandering about in a really un-composed manner.

"What, you were listening to our conversation?"

"I-It was by chance, it was just that it entered my ears by chance!"

Rinslet shook her head and denied.

"Although you're having a victory celebration party, since it's you guys, you would be having it in the academy's dining hall, right?"

"...Hn, yeah."

Kamito articulated poorly and nodded.

Kamito wasn't even a noble, and Claire also had her territory and property seized. Fianna was the former princess, but at the point of time she decided to admit into the academy, she was practically disinherited.

It didn't mean that they were short on money, but they didn't have the surplus to squander it.

"How about having lunch at a high-class restaurant in Academy Town once in a while?"

"Err, we don't have..."

Kamito staggered in his words—

"Hmm, to settle that, I will be treating. This is a small expense for my Laurenfrost family. Claire Rouge, your Highness, and the spirit over there, there is no need to hold back."

The ojou-sama brushed her platinum-blonde hair.

"No." "I decline."

However, Claire and Fianna mercilessly rejected her.

"Wh-Why?!"

"Because I don't want to be indebted to you."

"Speaking of which, why is Rinslet coming to Team Scarlet's victory celebration party?"

"Th-That's... err... u..."

Rinslet became teary at the merciless retorts by the two ojou-sama.

There was no longer any fragment of her braveness from just now.

At that point.

"In other words, Milady wants to have a meal with everyone ♪ "

Maid Carol suddenly appeared from somewhere.

"Carol!? Wh-What are you saying? This girl is just...!"

Pokapokapokapoka.

Turning bright red, Rinslet hits Carol's shoulder.

It was a splendid interpretation as usual.

"...What, if that was the case, all you had to do was say so at the beginning."

Claire shrugged her shoulders as she was astounded.

"Eh? I-It's alright... for me to also come together?"

"I don't do such spiteful things. It's just the right time, because Kamito was hospitalized due to his injuries, we

didn't celebrate the completion of the quest the other day . You come too."

Rinslet's face shone in a flash.

"Kamito, I want to eat parfait."

"Ahh, now that you mentioned it, I promised you that a while ago."

Tug-tug. His sleeves were pulled by Est, and Kamito nodded.

"Well, putting aside the high class restaurant, it might also be nice to eat in Academy Town."

They always settled lunch at the salon café with all-you-can-eat bread, as it was troublesome to specially get permission to go out, there was hardly any time they went outside the academy.

To try to go out to Academy Town once in a while was because it might be a good change of mood.

"Well then, it's decided. I'll go get the permission to go out of the academy right now."

"Ah, wait."

Kamito called Claire, who walked off, to stop.

"What?"

"I have a supplementary class for the fundamental subject after this."

"...Huh? Don't tell me you failed the fundamental subject?"

"...Sorry."

Kamito nodded, being discouraged.

"I can't believe it. Why did you fail such an easy lecture?"

"Gu..."

...He couldn't answer back. To begin with, Kamito, who was from the «Instructional School», had not received education on the systematic spirit subjects so far , so if he couldn't help it, he couldn't help it.

On the other hand, the results of Claire's lecture subjects were unexpectedly top-class even in the Academy.

If it was just by her results, she was a super honor student. The superior problem child was something often said about her.

"...It can't be helped. Well then, we'll wait till Kamito's supplementary class ends. It'll be a slightly late lunch, but is it alright if we meet in front of the main gate at two ?"

Chapter 3: Claire's Birthday

Part 1

—And just like that, Kamito went towards the fundamental subject classroom to take the supplementary class.

Since Est disliked sitting down and listening to the lecture, she seemed to be playing with Scarlet outside.

When he opened the door of the classroom, he spotted an appearance he recognized from behind among the scattered students.

That blue pony-tail was... without a doubt, the captain of the Knights, Ellis.

"She's also in the supplementary class?"

It was a little surprising that that serious knight girl had failed the lecture.

Kamito approached from behind to try to call out to her.

For the time being, he had to explain about this morning's incident.

Ellis opened her thick book, which was written in Spirit language, and was softly muttering it out.

In her engrossment in studying, she seemed to have completely not noticed that Kamito was drawing closer.

(By any chance, is she simply trying to memorize the contents of the book word for word?)

He thought that it couldn't be so, but the person herself was seriously trying to memorize it.

(...I see, she's the type that's overly serious and poor at studying.)

It was the same headlong type as her battle style. Types like this would make progress as long as they did not make a mistake in the way of putting in effort, however, they would stumble many times from time to time.

"Yo, Ellis."

"Hyan!"

The moment Kamito called out, a cutting-flash occurred.

As Ellis turned around, she swung her sword downwards.

"..."

The sword stuck in the desk and it bent.

Kamito had dodged the slash with a paper-thin difference.

"A-Are... you trying to kill me?!"

"Ka-Kazehaya Kamito... don't suddenly stand behind me!"

Despite that he was almost killed, she ended up being angry. ...How absurd.

"That was a very cute scream, Captain."

"Do you want to be made into chicken pilaf?"

Ellis' eyes dangerously hung up.

...It was very good that the variation of her cooking seemed to be spreading out nicely.

"I'm sorry for surprising you. Ellis, are you also taking supplementary class?"

"Yeah, that's right. I had failed the fundamental subject ."

"It's a painful thing for both of us. Since, we're in the same supplementary class after all, let us get along nicely ."

"Don't group me together with you, I was busy with the Knights work and failed to earn the credit!"

As he made a bitter smile at an enraged Ellis, Kamito sat beside her.

As expected, she wasn't wearing the Knights armor when she took the supplementary class.

Ellis in a normal uniform was somewhat refreshing.

She always had that gallant impression, but now she felt somewhat lovely.

(...By the way, Ellis' breasts are surprisingly big.)

Kamito was tentatively also a boy in puberty. It couldn't be helped that his eyes unconsciously went over there.

(With that size, isn't it considerably tight in the Knights breastplate?)

He was thinking about such things, when—

"Err... Kazehaya Kamito."

Suddenly, Ellis coughed.

"Uh?"

"It's regarding this morning, but I'm sorry."

"Eh?"

"I heard the circumstances from Claire and the others after that. It appears that I had misunderstood. I'm sorry... I want you to forgive me."

Ellis shook her ponytail and bowed her head down.

"Ah, don't worry about it. Instead, if Ellis didn't come at that time, how should I put it, I feel that that would have turned into various terrible things."

Kamito made a bitter smile as he waved his hand, and Ellis breathed a sigh of relief.

"They were making chocolates for the «Valentia Holy Festival», right?"

"...Ya, that seemed like it. Ellis, would you happen to be making it too?"

"M-Me!?"

At that moment, Ellis turned bright red.

"I-I don't have an interest in that kind of insolent event !"

She suddenly flared up for some reason.

"To make merry in such an event is outrageous, it's like neglecting one's duty as an academy student."

Ellis coughed, and fixed her sights on her spirit subject textbook again.

To cool her flushed face, she began to mutter and memorize again.

Being unable to just watch, Kamito advised her.

"Ellis, even without memorizing everything, isn't it alright to memorize just the important parts?"

"B-But, in that case, I would not be studying it precisely."

"It's much more futile to blindly memorize without understanding the contents. Look."

"Fuaa, Wh-Wha-What are you doing?!"

"Since, you have seriously taken down your notes, I'll teach you just the important parts."

Kamito looked at the book from the side, and Ellis was flustered.

"Hn, what's the matter?"

"Y-Your arm is touching my breast... Err..."

"Hn?"

She seemed to have said something, but her voice was too soft such that he couldn't hear it.

Kamito drew his face even closer, and Ellis' face turned bright red.

Without caring, Kamito was placing marks one after another with the pencil onto the textbook.

"This is like this, right? And, this is—"

"U-Um, I see... Your teaching method is good."

"Is that so?"

Well, certainly if compared to Claire's teaching method , it might be better. There was the time he got Claire to explain the contents of the lecture before, but... honestly, he completely did not understand what she was saying.

A genius type like Claire often seemed bad at teaching others.

"T-The next time, teach me various things again. Your explanations are very easy to understand."

"Ahh, no problem."

Kamito friendlily assured her, and then, he set his sights towards the platform in a fluster.

Before he knew it, his lecturer-in-charge Freya was standing on the platform.

If he had turned to the front a few seconds later, it was certain that a chalk would come flying at the speed of sound.

Part 2

Teacher Freya's supplementary class began.

Ellis nodded seriously as usual as she was listening attentively to the lecture.

"—In other words, depending on the situation, it appears that there are also cases that result in the annihilation of contracted spirits. Of course, I believe that there isn't a fool that would reach her hand out to Cursed Armament Seals."

What Teacher Freya was talking about was regarding the deciphering of the spirit seal and the «Cursed Armament Seal».

Cursed Armament Seal, so to speak, was about the matter of being granted a spirit seal through artificial means.

It was still used during the Ranbal war, but its use has been currently prohibited by the cross-national treaty. Although, it was an open secret that some countries and organizations were still advancing its research.

(Because even the «Instructional School» I was at was also researching the Cursed Armament Seals...)

An orphan of the «Instructional School», Jio Inzagi, they fought the other day.

The part where that boy had sealed seventy-two spirits was also a type of Cursed Armament Seal that was engraved on his body.

Besides sealing spirits, Cursed Armament Seals had various effects like forcefully drawing out a contracted spirit's power and granting new attributes. Just hearing this much, they seemed handy, but— for it to be prohibited by the cross-national treaty, of course, there was a proper reason.

Among the people implanted with the Cursed Armament Seal, there were endless cases of fatal side effects occurring.

"During the Ranbal war, many elementalists were rounded up, and among them there were also people forcefully implanted with the Cursed Armament Seal by the military. What became of most of them?— Ellis, try answering."

"Okay, the power of their contracted spirits was driven into a rampage, and there were even fatal cases, I've heard."

Ellis, who was pointed out from the platform, clearly answered.

"That's right. It is said that the number of people, whose body are compatible with the Cursed Armament Seal, is only less than ten percent even among the elementalists. However, in spite of the fact that that risk is evident, even now, the fact that illegal researches are continuing means that there are that many people who seek for easy power."

Teacher Freya informed in a strict voice, and swung her cane.

Suddenly, Kamito, who thought the teacher's attitude was suspicious, whispered to Ellis in a soft voice.

"She's sincerely emphasizing about the Cursed Armament Seal. This isn't the content of the fundamental subject, right?"

"...Yes. As a matter of fact, there was a notification for the Sylphid Knights this morning."

Ellis slightly nodded.

"Somehow, recently there seemed to be a group illegally selling Cursed Armament Seals in Academy Town. As it's the period just before the Blade Dance, she's probably accosting a warning even during the lecture."

The sale of Cursed Armament Seals was naturally prohibited within the Ordesia Empire.

The princess maidens attending the academy should also perfectly understand that riskiness.

However, even amongst them, there were those kinds of people, who would reach out for easy power.

Especially, for a team whose results were sluggish just before the Blade Dance, it wouldn't be strange for some people to take the plunge and have an implantation, aware of the danger.

The implantation of the Cursed Armament Seal cost a large sum of money, but the princess maidens attending the academy were mostly great nobles possessing territory.

As far as the illegal organization was concerned, it was business that also had far lower risks than poaching in the spirit forest and selling sealed spirits on the black market, and could also raise enormous profits.

"Having a hand in the Cursed Armament Seals is the weakness of the heart. However, the number one evil is, of course, the people illegally handling the Cursed Armament Seals. As a knight, I'll never forgive those people who ruin the academy."

Ellis tightly clenched her fist, and muttered with determination.

The weakness of the heart that sought dangerous power— He couldn't condemn that.

Anyone would also have the likelihood of falling into that temptation.

Even that proud Claire Rouge was like that.

Despairing in her own weakness, she accepted the frenzy spirit Restia presented.

To want to obtain strong power no matter what one had to do— That was something hard to understand for Kamito, who had once held the title of strongest.

Being able to exchange feelings with spirits in spite of being a boy! —There was also a time that he thought of even cursing that power, which was the same as that person, who was called the history's worst Demon King.

(—However, I can imagine it.)

Kamito cast his eyes onto his left hand covered by a leather glove.

If he couldn't take her (Restia) back with his current power—

It might be possible that he would end up reaching out for that prohibited power.

"How many such people has the Sylphid Knights arrested?"

"Err, of course, to expose this type of illegal organization, the Knights are also concentrating all their strengths, but— since that assault the other day, our present condition is that we are being afflicted by a serious short-handedness."

"Is that so?..."

The incident the other day— That was about the incident that Jio Inzagi battled the Sylphid Knights, and stole highly classified materials of the «strategic-class militarized spirit» from the sealed library in the Academy.

There were five knights, who were injured that time. Furthermore, Rakka and Reishia, who were also Ellis' teammates, were injured during the quest in Mine Town.

The total number of people in the Sylphid Knights was twenty at best.

So, that meant that a third of the organization was not functioning in their present condition.

"Are your two teammates already alright?"

"Ahh, they seemed to have recovered to the point of being able to somehow move their body. They have not yet recovered to the point where they can come back to the academy. If you had not come to help at that time, the girls and I would surely have been unable to return to the academy. ...I have to express my gratitude to you again."

"We were at that place because of our quest. It's natural to protect comrades of the academy, so Ellis, it isn't something you have to feel indebted for. We also received a reward and a thank-you-letter from the Knights."

Kamito reflexively made a bitter smile at the ever-serious Ellis.

"That's something awarded to Team Scarlet. What I am saying is, err, that **I have to express a more personal gratitude** to you, or perhaps I should say that I want to do so..."

"Uh?"

Ellis bashfully mumbled. It was unusual for her, who was always frigid.

"What? Say it in a louder voice."

"...I-I mean—"

Ellis came closer to his body.

Smelling the faint yet nice smell of soap, Kamito was spontaneously startled.

"Err, do you have some plans after the supplementary class?"

"Plans? Ahh, we're having a victory celebration party with Claire and the others, but... Ellis, are you also coming?"

"..."

When Kamito answered, Ellis placed her hand at her chin like she was a little perplexed—

"No, I'll have to decline. I seem to be disliked by Claire Rouge."

She calmly shook her head.

"Then, are you free in the evening?"

"Yes, as long as it's not too late..."

Kamito tilted his head—

"However, why?"

"Uh, ah... I mean, err, I-I want you to help teach me with my studies!"

"Studies?"

"That's right! D-Didn't you promise that you'll teach me just now?!"

Ellis' face turned bright red.

"Err, I certainly said that, but... it's rather sudden."

"...W-Will you teach me or will you not, which is it?!"

"I-I got it... Let's see, well then, five o'clock in front of the middle auditorium, is that alright?"

"U-Um, I got it. After all, I also have to prepare various things."

"Prepare?"

"I-It's nothing... J-Just look forward to it!"

After telling it one-sidedly, Ellis quickly hid her face beneath her textbook.

(...What on earth was that?)

Part 3

After the supplementary class ended and bidding farewell to Ellis, Kamito hurriedly ran to the front of the main gate of the academy.

"You're late, Kamito!"

Pishi! *Pishi!* Claire was making sounds with her whip. ...She seemed pretty angry.

"Good grief, a man keeping a lady waiting is the worst."

"If I was the queen, I'd behead you."

Rinslet and Fianna were also angry.

"Sorry..." Kamito docilely apologized.

"Kamito, I want to eat parfait soon."

Est was motionlessly and expressionlessly staring at Kamito.

"Yeah, I keep on relying on Est every time. So, ask for anything today."

"I'm happy, Kamito."

Saying that, Est grasped tightly onto Kamito's hand.

"Wh—"

Claire and the others, the three of them, became stiff like they were frozen.

"Hn, what's the matter?"

As Kamito's hands were kept joined with Est's, he turned around—

The three of them kept glaring at Kamito, as they groaned "Gununu...".

"Fufu, everyone, his other hand is still free, you know?
"

Carol placed her hand near her mouth, and gently smiled.

"I-It's not like that!" "Holding hands and such..." "I-I'm not a kid, you know!"

The three ojou-sama blushed, and quickly turned away.

"Ah, is that so? Well then, by the order of arrival, I'll do it."

Carol was tightly grasping onto Kamito's hand.

"...!"

"This is a little embarrassing. ...Hn, what's the matter, everyone?"

"I-It's nothing, Let's quickly get going, idiot!"

Suddenly, Claire walked off like she was angry.

"A man who toys with a girl's feelings deserves death."

"Haa, Kamito-kun is really the demon king of the night ..."

Rinslet and Fianna also started walking.

"...What was that?"

With his hands kept joined with the two of theirs, Est's and Carol's, Kamito tilted his head.

Part 4

If Areishia Spirit Academy was a castle, then Academy Town at the bottom would be its castle town.

Its outer edge was encircled by the spirit forest and ramparts, and the town was divided into five areas associated with the five grand spirits.

The part that academy students used for a breather after examinations was primarily the «Water» area. Rivaling the imperial capital, entertainment facilities, such as jewelry shops, restaurants and large public baths, were gathered here.

On the other hand, the «Wind» area, which Kamito and the others were heading to, was an area that ordinary townspeople lived in.

A vivid embroidered horizontal banner was hung out on the road, and small wooden frames that were for deifying the spirits of the land were being made everywhere. It seemed to be preparations for tomorrow's «Valentia Holy Festival».

"It's awfully busy. It still has a different ambiance compared to the austere Imperial Empire's grand spirit festival."

Being brought up in the imperial capital, Fianna voiced her thoughts.

"That's because the Valentia Holy Festival is a festival by ordinary townspeople. Its nuance is a little different from the ritual that princess maidens dedicate to spirits in."

"Either way, it's close to the opening day of the Blade Dance."

As Kamito gazed at the townscape full of liveliness, he muttered.

"... Ahh, that might be the case."

Claire nodded as she walked.

Although it's called the Blade Dance, it didn't mean dedicating blade dances all day and night.

After all, it's a grand festival that gathered nobles of many kingdoms. Participants would be invited to the sponsoring nation's reception hall, and a dance party would be held throughout the dance, and countless numbers of fireworks would be launched at night. Near the grounds of Astral Zero, a famous town furnished with entertainment facilities was made.

Rather than calling it a solemn ritual, it was closer to call it a large-scale revelry that spanned over several days .

By the way, three years ago— Kamito, who was in female clothing, was invited to a dance, and nobles came proposing to him one after another. ...Even as he recalled that now, it gave him goose bumps.

"Ah, Kamito-san, have you seen the Blade Dance?"

"N-No, I just heard stories like that!"

Kamito shook his head in a fluster at Rinslet, who tilted her head.

"Fufu, there's no way Kamito-kun knows it, right?"

Being the only one among them who knew Kamito's true identity, Fianna giggled.

"O-Oi, Fianna!?"

Kamito raised his voice in a fluster.

He was probably not suspected by Claire, and when he turned around.

"Hn?"

Claire was—

Standing still at the roadside, and staring motionlessly at a display window of a shop.

It seemed to be a store that was selling jewels and accessories.

"...What's the matter, Claire?"

"I-It's nothing!"

When Kamito approached, Claire jumped up.

"?"

Feeling suspicious, Kamito peered into the display window—

A small cat shaped pendant was placed on the shelf.

(...Hmm, as I thought, she's also a girl.)

He ended up thinking that the face profile of Claire, whose face had turned bright red, was unusually cute.

"Do you want this?"

"I-I said it's nothing, right! I'm completely not interested in this sort of things!"

"I see. I thought it especially suits you."

"... A-Ar-Aren't you being an idiot! Le-Let's get going, I'm hungry!"

Claire turned bright red like a lobster, and started briskly walking off.

"...What, she isn't being honest as usual."

Kamito shrugged his shoulders in disappointment.

"The day of the Valentia Holy Festival is also that girl's birthday."

"Eh?"

Rinslet, who was behind him before he noticed, calmly informed him.

"Tomorrow's her birthday?"

"Yes, although, she is brushing it off like it is nothing."

(...Ahh, I see.)

Kamito gazed at Claire's back, who was briskly walking off.

Four years ago, because the Calamity Queen — Rubia Elstein, had rebelled against the fire Elemental Lord, the married couple of the Elstein duke family had their noble status divested.

Since the day that incident occurred, Claire's life had completely changed.

He was sure that she currently did not have the leeway or something to look forward to her birthday.

"..."

Kamito returned his sights to the store's display window.

There was the cat pendant with a ruby-like spirit crystal inlaid in its pupils.

It seemed to be something pretty expensive.

Kamito sighed, and gently moved away from the display window.

"Rinslet, thank you for telling me. You're a good person."

"Wh-What are you saying, I do not understand what you mean!"

Rinslet's face turned bright red, and she turned her face away.

(...Twenty gold coins, huh? Well, what do I do?)

Part 5

The diner, called Japanese Bluefish Pavilion and recommended by Carol, was a very stylish building of red bricks.

He sat on an inner table that sits six people and promptly opened the menu.

There was a soup that completely used one chicken, a meat dish full of spices, a fried bean curd bread covered in honey, and a freshwater fish pie. The dishes drawn in the menu were all full of things that stimulated his appetite.

However, what he was a little troubled by was— the reaction of the waitress girls.

They were pointing at Kamito and whispering.

"Hey, by any chance, isn't he the male elementalist in the rumors?" "You mean the one that defeated the rampaging militarized spirit in that town?" "He's making five girls wait upon him. It's as if he has a king's pretension." "Even such a small girl, his poison fangs..." " A licentious beast... No, perhaps I should call him the licentious king." "The licentious king..."

...What was licentious king? He wished that they stopped making so many new terms.

"A commoner's restaurant is also not bad once in a while."

"This is the first time I came to a place like this. Is there some sort of special etiquette?"

Rinslet and Fianna were looking around the store's interior, un-composed.

Claire and Est had been looking together at the dessert menu.

"I'm lost. The European pear tart also looks delicious, also the peach mousse."

"Kamito, is it alright if I request for all these?"

"No, all is definitely not possible, you know?"

Kamito waved his hand in a fluster—

"Kamito promised. I could request anything I like today."

"Gu..."

"You promised."

Est's innocent pupils were staring at Kamito.

She had that never-changing empty expression as usual... However, there was a somewhat strange impact.

Finally, Kamito ran out of patience, and hung his head down.

"...I got it. I promised after all."

"Kamito, I'm happy to be contracted to Kamito."

Est tightly embraced Kamito's arm.

"Haha, Est, you're exaggerating."

Kamito, who made a bitter smile, was—

"..."

Being glared at by Claire and the others.

After Kamito consolidated the order, the dishes were carried out immediately. The dishes, which were fully

lined up on the table, were all delicious, and the three ojou-sama, who had refined palates, also seemed completely satisfied.

"Claire, don't casually move the mushroom onto my plate."

"What, despite that I went through the trouble to give it."

"You're no good with mushrooms, right? I have pretty much gotten used to your likes and dislikes."

"...Um, why do you know that I'm no good with mushrooms?"

"I've generally grasped your taste."

"Eh? Th-That's..."

Claire's face turned red.

"Kamito-san, here's my fish."

"Kamito-kun, I'll also give you my shellfish."

"You all..."

Having had ingredients thrown in without reservation from these fussy ojou-samas, Kamito's pasta had somewhat become something that he didn't really know.

It was dessert after the meal. There were the multifarious parfait, the tart placed with a plentiful amount of seasonal fruits, the fluffy freshly-baked sponge cake, the mousse entwined with a bittersweet sauce and so on. They were lined up on the table, almost like a jewel box.

"It's very cute!" "How pretty." "...Wh-What should I have?"

Gazing at the desserts lined up before them, the three of them placed their hands on their cheeks, seemingly in bliss.

Even noble ojou-samas seemed to turn into normal girls in front of sweet desserts.

"You girls, are you really going to eat all of these?"

"Of course. When girls eat sweet things, their stomachs are connected to Astral Zero."

Claire said something he didn't really understand with a tense expression.

Yup! Yup! Fianna and Rinslet nodded.

"Fianna, I'll take a mouthful of cake."

"It can't be helped, I'll exchange it with your pudding."

"Claire, I will give you my peach. Be grateful."

"Eh? Is that fine, Rinslet?"

"Yes, I'm no good with peaches... I'll exchange it for your slave."

"...Um, that's a tough choice."

"Don't arbitrarily trade a person... Eh, I'm equal to a peach?"

"Claire, that's my cherry."

"Carol, look, it's your favorite European pear."

"Ah, well then, I'll return Milady's beloved peach back."

"Eh, Rinslet, you—"

"Carol, wh-wha-what are you saying?!"

Rinslet hit Carol.

(Nevertheless...)

As he glanced towards Claire beside him— Kamito muttered within his heart.

He felt like Claire had changed a little.

The time he just met her, how should he put it, she had a more brooding impression, and she had that atmosphere, like a wild cat not letting anyone near her.

...Something probably changed within her with the assembling of the team and comrades.

"...? Kamito, what are you looking at?"

"Hn? You have cream on your cheek. Come on, I'll get it off."

"Id-Idiot, I'll get it off myself!"

Claire's face turned bright red, and she turned away, at that moment.

"Thank you for waiting. Here's this store's famous dish , Special Big Parfait♪"

"Eh?"

Together with the cheerful voice—

The waitress with her glamorous tall figure came to Kamito's table.

She was a bewitchingly beautiful girl, and her wavy jade green hair was grown long.

When he looked carefully, the tips of her ears were sharply pointed.

(...The Elfim race?)

They were subhumans that were reported to have crossed over from Astral Zero during the distant mythic age.

It seemed that the pure Elfim race did not exist anymore now, but— their physical trait of having long

ears was famous. They were often seen in the urban areas of the empire, there are also Elfim race students in the academy, but one working as a waitress in a diner was rare.

What she had carried over was— a gigantic chocolate parfait.

That was enshrined right in the middle of the table and had a size almost like a nightmare.

"...Eh, who ordered this?!"

"It wasn't me."

Claire shook her head. Fianna and Rinslet also shook theirs.

"..."

The line of sight from everyone naturally gathered on one girl.

"...Est?"

"Kamito promised that I could request for anything."

"Err, that's..."

"You promised."

Est gazed at Kamito with her innocent pupils.

"By the way, if you leave stuff behind, there'll be a fine ♪"

The beautiful waitress pleasantly smiled.

"Wh-What do we do?"

"It appears that there's no choice but for everyone to cooperate and eat it."

"...It can't be helped."

Kamito sighed in disappointment—

(...Hn?)

Suddenly, he discovered the figure of a girl he recognized on the other side of the window.

She had a stunning blue haired pony-tail, and was in her Knights armor.

She was Ellis, who he just bid farewell to at the academy a while ago.

"What's the matter, Kamito?"

"I just saw Ellis pass by over there. Does she have a Knights quest?"

"Ellis? Hmm..."

Claire glared at Kamito, seemingly displeased.

"...You're really concerned about Ellis."

"Hn, what do you mean... Mogu, mogugugu!?"

Suddenly, a spoon full of parfait was pushed into Kamito's mouth.

"Wh-What, despite being Kamito, to begin with, Ellis is of a rival team!"

"Mogu, mogugugugu..."

"Besides, you're a slave spirit only for me!"

As she forcefully stuffed the spoon into Kamito's mouth, Claire flared up.

(How unreasonable...)

Part 6

(...Fufu, what interesting-looking girls♪)

The tall beautiful girl, who returned to the kitchen, stuck out her tongue and licked her wet red lips.

She was the one, who carried over the gigantic parfait to Kamito's table, the Elfim race waitress.

From the kitchen, she viewed a hole as if she was evaluating or something—

Finally, she made a short sigh.

(Well, should I stop here today? Though they're the long-awaited prey.)

The risk of those girls as someone to trade with was a little high.

Those, who reached out for her goods— were always princess maidens who lost their confidence and were obsessed with strong delusions and a sense of duty.

(...Although, that red haired girl seemed to be of a little hope.)

Vivian Melosa— She was a trader of Corpse Federations (Murders), who specially handled Cursed Armament Seals.

She once taught in the Imperial Capital's Academy, and was the leading person in Cursed Armament Seal research. However, due to the reason that the research of Cursed Armament Seals was prohibited after the Ranbal war, the academy was banished. After that, she moved around from organization to organization, doing nothing but research on Cursed Armament Seals.

The academy, which assembled superior princess maidens from all around the country, was a suitable experiment site to her.

So far, she had infiltrated the academy several times, and performed the implantation of Cursed Armament Seals into girls desiring power.

(...Although, there was only one that succeeded.)

Brushing her wavy jade green hair, she giggled.

"—Well, shall I patiently search? For my favorite kitten-chan?"

Chapter 4: A Knight's Sincerity

Part 1

By the time all of them finished conquering the gigantic parfait, it was already evening.

Kamito, who had returned from Academy Town, turned up at the central auditorium as he had promised Ellis.

Upon waiting a little while, Ellis came running from afar and was out of breath.

"...S-Sorry, I kept you waiting."

"No, I didn't wait that long."

Kamito made a bitter smile at Ellis, who was gasping out of breath.

"Hey, Ellis, you were at the Academy Town just now, weren't you?"

"Y-You saw me!?"

Ellis' ponytail sprung up.

"Ahh, I just happened to see you from the restaurant's window. Was it the Knights' security?"

"No, err... I-I was shopping for various things."

Ahem, Ellis coughed and her face reddened for some reason.

A question mark came to Kamito's mind but... well, that was fine.

"For the time being, if we're going to study, are we going to the library or something?"

"Ah, no... not the library."

Ellis shook her head in a fluster.

"Hn, not the library? Then, are we going to an empty classroom somewh—"

"...I-It's a room."

"Huh?"

Kamito reflexively did not believe his ears.

"A room..."

"I-I mean, err... I-I want you to teach me in my room!"

Ellis shouted with her face turning bright red.

"..."

"I-Is that a no?"

"No, hey wait, for a boy like me to enter a girl's room..."

"A-A girl..."

In an instant, Ellis made a face like she lost her head over something—

"Ho-However, aren't you staying with Claire Rouge and the others in a room together?"

"No, well... that was the way things turned out."

Kamito scratched the back of his head as he answered.

"O-Or, you don't want to come to the room of a straight-laced girl like me—"

"N-No, there's no such thing!"

Kamito shook his head in a fluster because Ellis looked a little hurt.

"W-Well then—"

"...Ahh, I got it. I got it. Allow me to enter."

Even as Kamito still did not comprehend anything, he nodded with a bit of desperation.

Part 2

Just like that— Kamito was brought along to the Weasel Class' dormitory.

Being the exact opposite of the Raven Class that gathered superior problem children, Weasel Class was a class of diligent honor students.

Ellis' room was, up the stairs, on the second floor of the building.

Ellis coughed in front of the door.

"This is my room. O-Of course, this is the first time a boy is entering it."

"...If you say it like that, I'm getting somewhat tense."

Ellis opened the room's door and muttered an incantation in the spirit language.

In that moment, the ceiling's spirit crystal glowed and the inside of the dim room was brightly illuminated.

The interior design was not so different from Claire's room. However, Ellis' room had been neatly arranged.

"You have tidied up nicely. That's just like the capable Ellis."

"Ahh, that's because if I don't tidy up, my overly-serious roommate will get angry."

"A roommate more overly-serious than Ellis?..."

It was discourteous to Ellis, but he couldn't imagine it a bit.

"Where is this roommate now?"

"She is away for a few weeks because of a quest from the Academy. If that person was now at this place— you probably wouldn't be able to leave here alive."

While saying something dangerous, Ellis laid out a cushion on the floor for him.

"Make yourself at home. I'll prepare the tea and snacks now."

"Ahh, sorry."

Ellis immediately boiled hot water, and took out hot black tea and snacks.

Despite being an ojou-sama of a great noble family, she was very capable in such areas. Since the Fahrengart family was of a military parentage, she might have received strict training from when she was young.

"This is delicious. Ellis, did you make it?"

"Y-You can say that. It's somewhat my hobby."

Ellis was acting bashfully, like she was a bit embarrassed.

It was a sponge cake sprinkled with black tea powder on the surface. It had a simple taste since its sweetness was mild.

He had known that cooking was her strong point, but it was surprising that she could make such a delicate thing.

"Relax for a while. I'll go make preparations now."

"Hn, what preparations?"

When Kamito inquired— Ellis drew out her sword at her waist.

With a weird voice filled with intensity,

"It's preparations."

"I-I got it..."

With the sword kept thrust out at the back of his neck, Kamito nodded.

When Ellis disappeared into the next room and Kamito became alone, he sighed a little.

(...What on earth was that?)

As he sipped the black tea that Ellis made, he looked around the interior of the room.

There were neatly folded uniforms and pajamas on top of the bed.

There were lovely teddy-bear and rabbit plushies lined up beside them.

(Surprisingly, she has girlish preferences...)

While thinking about such things, he moved his line of sight, then—

Incidentally, his eyes stopped on top of the writing desk.

A spirit crystal objet d'art, which emitted a faint glow, had been placed near the desk.

(That's—)

Kamito got close, and took it into his hand.

Inside the transparent spirit crystal, various phantoms surfaced and disappeared—

"A spirit crystal that seals memories, huh?..."

It was an article that could confine the scene in one's memory by putting divine power into it.

The appearance of the same girl had been repeatedly surfacing many times within the spirit crystal.

Her glamorous hair was fluttering and she was holding a jet-black demon sword— the appearance of a very young girl.

"...Eh, isn't that me from three years ago?!"

Kamito reflexively shouted.

Yes, the one who was being reflected in there was without a doubt—

The appearance of the strongest Blade Dancer Ren Ashbell.

(That reminds me, she had said that she admired Ren Ashbell...)

As he made a heavy sigh, he put back the memory-sealing spirit ore onto the desk.

If Kamito did not make sure that at least his true identity was absolutely not exposed to her—

He would end up destroying a pure girl's dream, which he couldn't bring himself to do.

(...Hn?)

Suddenly, Kamito noticed that the appearance of a girl other than Ren Ashbell was being projected inside the spirit crystal.

She had radiant shiny blonde hair. She was a beautiful girl, who had an ice-like cold look.

The one who was standing bashfully beside the girl was probably Ellis when she was young—

(I have a recollection of this girl somewhere...)

Kamito had his doubts— at that moment.

"...I-I kept you waiting."

He heard Ellis' voice that seemed like it'll vanish anytime from behind.

"Ellis?"

Kamito turned around—

"..."

His mouth dropped opened.

There was a maid.

"...?"

After Kamito rubbed his eyes, he opened his eyes once more.

...Yes, there was certainly a maid.

She had a tidy dark blue maid uniform matched with a white apron, and a lovely long skirt with frills.

And then, she had a headdress, which was slightly placed on her head.

It was Ellis in complete maid attire.

"Y-You, what on earth..."

Kamito gulped down his saliva, and—

"I-I'm now your exclusive-use maid from now. ...I-Is that alright?"

Ellis, whose face turned bright red, held the hem of her long skirt and bowed.

Beneath her turned-over skirt, he slightly got a quick look at a black garter belt.

"Wh—"

Kamito was startled and covered his eyes with both hands in a fluster.

"D-Don't look so much... It's embarrassing."

Ellis' face increasingly reddened, and she rubbed her knees together bashfully.

As she wasn't wearing her armor, her quivering large breasts were being highlighted more than usual.

Kamito was at a lost for words—

Ellis whispered with a seemingly uneasy expression.

"A-As I thought, these kind of clothes... don't suit me?"

"No...err, that's not it."

Kamito said as he averted his eyes.

...Or rather, she was cute. Staggeringly cute.

No, even the usual Ellis was certainly cute but—

He didn't think that Ellis putting on a maid uniform would be so charming.

However, beyond that, Kamito was more bewildered.

"...W-Why a maid uniform?"

"Th-This is an act of sincerity from me..."

"Sincerity?"

Kamito asked in return to Ellis, who had muttered seemingly embarrassed.

The maid uniform was an act of sincerity... He didn't understand the meaning.

Ellis folded her arms and glared directly at Kamito with her reddish brown pupils.

"I-It's about the quest the other day. As the representative of the Syphid Knights, I had been thinking that I had to thank you for helping that time. ...Th-This is only as the representative of the Syphid Knights!"

"No, I had said that I don't need things like thanks. It's natural to help my comrades."

Kamito said that—

"In that case, I won't be able to settle down. Wh-What should I do to be able to offer my thanks... I had been troubled this entire week."

"...Why is it that the outcome is a maid uniform?"

"Umm, upon consulting my team-mates Rakka and Reishia, they told me that it's best that I put on this attire to show my sincerity to you. After all, you're a maniac, who would be excited by such an appearance. I-In the beginning, I also had a problem with it, but devoting my whole body and soul to offer my thanks to the person I'm indebted to is the household precept of my Fahrengart family."

"Why those two, teaching you worthless things..."

Kamito's face twitched. ...In short, Ellis had been tricked by those two.

"Ellis, don't misunderstand. I'm not a maniac who's attracted to maid uniforms."

Kamito tried to resolve the strange misunderstanding, but—

"...Wh-What? That means—"

It seemed like Ellis interpreted that in a different meaning.

"...To do it, do you mean that?"

"Huh?"

"Y-**You mean for me to put on an even sexier attire, right**?!"

"What are you saying!"

"Kuu, you damn licentious king...!"

"The usage-rights for licentious king is already acquired by the townspeople!?"

"I'll absolutely not give in to such an insolent request!"

Ellis drew out her sword from her waist and quickly thrust it before the back of Kamito's neck.

It seemed like she didn't lose her skills as a knight even though she became a maid. ...That was obvious.

"I-I got it, it really suits you, maid uniforms are the best, maid uniforms hurray!"

"...Hmm, That's enough."

As Ellis thrust the tip of her sword before the back of Kamito's neck—

"Come on, Kamito, you can instruct me to do anything you want!"

"You're a pretty proud maid... Well then, Ellis, what can you do?"

"My specialty is thrusting a spear."

"What kind of maid are you...?"

"I can also use a sword, but my expertise is using a spear."

Ellis proudly puffed her chest out.

"Don't you have anything other than dangerous skills?"

"Cooking is in its own way a specialty."

"Ahh, I see. Well, can I make a request?"

"Of course. What would you like?"

"Let's see... I also have dinner later, so I would like something light and hold-able."

"I got it. Honestly, I was thinking of what to do if you said body sushi[4] but—"

"...Why you."

Kamito groaned with a deadpan look—

Suddenly, he tried asking a thought that came to his mind.

"By the way, does this mean you'll do it if I request it?"

"Y-You insolent person!"

At that moment, the hidden sword, which Ellis let loose, pruned off Kamito's forelocks.

"...H-How's the taste? **Master**."

Just like that—

It ended up with Ellis preparing food for Kamito.

As expected of having been trained for the sake of the gentleman she will be married to in the future, from the cooking to the arrangement of food, her skills were very good. ...She was the kind of person whose example he wanted a certain hellcat ojou-sama to follow.

Nevertheless—

"...I beg you. Spare me that way of calling me."

Kamito groaned with a deadpan look.

"Um, even so, those two had said that this is the official way of calling you."

"No, because you have been fooled, you know?"

Kamito grumbled as he chewed on a cheese cutlet of one mouth-size.

It had a crunchy batter that used the first-class wheat flour. The highest grade cheese, which was placed between the meat, was delicious as it melted on top of his tongue.

"...Delicious. Normally delicious."

"Mm, it's normal?..."

Ellis pouted her lips, seemingly frustrated.

"I'm praising you. It's difficult to make normal things normally delicious."

"I-Is that so...!"

Ellis blushed with her chest tightening.

"Ellis would become a good bride."

"...! Wh-What are you saying!"

Bishuu!

She thrust out a fork stuck with a cheese cutlet before Kamito.

"Wh-What are you doing all of a sudden!"

"Hmm, it's because you said something strange!"

Ellis sternly glared at Kamito.

And then—

"...O-Open your mouth."

"Huh?"

Kamito asked back—

Bishuu, bishuu!

The godspeed thrusting was unleashed once again.

"Owa!?"

"Don't avoid it! I'm trying to feed you—"

"Trying to feed me... What's with that!?"

"I heard that that's the duty of a maid. Come on, quickly... say 'Ahh'!"

Ellis thrust out the godspeed fork before him.

She had said that thrusting was her specialty, as expected, even for Kamito, it took all his might to dodge.

...Eh, what kind of training was this?!

"It's dangerous, you almost poked my eyes!"

"Hmm, it's because you're escaping. Don't escape!"

—*Hamuu*.

Finally, the fork was pushed into his mouth.

Mogumogumogu.

"H-How is it?"

"...Delicious."

Kamito said his honest thoughts—

"Al-Alright, one more mouthful..."

This time she gently moved the fork into his mouth.

Hamuu.

"Ho-How is it this time?"

"...Ahh, delicious."

Upon nodding once again, Ellis lightly giggled, seemingly delighted.

(...Hmm. This is, as expected, a little embarrassing.)

Part 3

By the time that he finished eating Ellis' cooking, it had already turned completely dark outside.

It was about time he had to make dinner for Claire and the others, who were waiting at the dormitory.

When he informed Ellis about that matter...she made a slightly disappointed face.

After helping Ellis tidy up the tableware, he and Ellis, who changed into her uniform, went outside the dormitory.

The moment Ellis took off her maid uniform, she suddenly seemed to be embarrassed by her recent actions , so as she walked on the path shone by the moonlight, she hung her head down the whole time.

...Naturally, just like her, Kamito was also embarrassed .

"I apologize for overstaying. Your cooking was delicious."

"Yes, I'm glad that I could properly express my gratitude to you. Because today is probably the last chance I can invite you to my room."

"What do you mean?"

"It's about the roommate I talked about just now. She'll be finishing her quest and returning very soon."

"Is your roommate that scary?"

Upon saying that, Ellis' expression slightly darkened.

"Velsaria Eva Fahrengart— She's my older stepsister, by two-years. She's also the former captain of the Sylphid Knights."

"Velsaria..."

Kamito was startled. That name was, if he wasn't mistaken, what Claire was talking—

"The academy's strongest elementalist... is actually your sister, Ellis!?"

"Yes, it's not like we're blood related. She was once also expected to become a future

Twelve Knight Numbers Commander candidate, but— after she was defeated by that Ren Ashbell in the first match at the Blade Dance three years ago, that story had also disappeared."

"...!?"

"What's the matter? Do you know about my sister?"

"...N-No, it's nothing."

Kamito shook his head in a fluster.

(...I see, no wonder I had recalled hearing that name before.)

—He remembered. She was the opponent of the first match of the Blade Dance three years ago.

She was a girl with a beautiful face of ice and beautiful blonde hair.

"...My sister is like the person who embodied the image of the knight that I try to idealize."

Ellis exhaled a white breath as she muttered.

"However, now that person—"

Muttering like in a monologue— Ellis stopped her steps there.

They had arrived before the gate of the Raven Class dormitory.

Kamito looked up, and the window of Claire's room had light.

"Ellis, thank you for today. Well then, see you tomorrow."

"Ah-Ahh, wait—"

Kamito waved his hand and walked off towards the dormitory.

At that moment, when he walked for a little while on the path leading to the building of the dormitory.

"...Ka-Kamito!"

Ellis called Kamito to a halt from behind.

It wasn't her usual frigid voice. It was the voice like an urgent scream.

"...Ellis?"

Kamito turned around—

"Ah..."

Ellis widened her eyes and was surprised.

Why did she show that expression— even she didn't understand why she called out to him.

"What's the matter?"

"No, err..."

"Um?"

Kamito became concerned and approached—

"...!"

Ellis —as though she had made a resolution of something important— took in a deep breath.

"Th-The truth is I have a favor to ask you, but..."

"A favor?"

Kamito frowned and asked back.

What came to his mind was— the incident before he received the quest on the Mine Town two weeks ago.

Ellis was trying to scout Kamito into her team.

Kamito, who had already assembled a team with Claire, plainly rejected her, but now that her two comrades became unable to participate in the opposition battles, she might try to scout him once again.

While Kamito scratched his head as he was troubled, he shook his head.

"Ellis, sorry, but I can't join your..."

"Th-That's not it!"

Ellis' face reddened as she shouted. ..It seemed that he had jumped to a wrong conclusion.

"Then..."

"Kamito, err... do you feel like joining the Sylphid Knights?"

"The Knights?"

Kamito spontaneously asked back at those unexpected words.

The Sylphid Knights— An elite student organization that guarded the public order and morals of the academy .

(For me to join it... What on earth does this mean?)

Ellis gazed at Kamito awkwardly.

"Err...it's just until my comrades come back, I would want you to assist the Knights."

Kamito recalled the things he talked with Ellis during this morning's supplementary lecture.

As a result of the attack incident the other day, including Ellis' two teammates, seven knights were forced to withdraw from the Sylphid Knights. The Sylphid Knights, which had lost a third of its members, was now in a state that it was not functioning normally.

Indeed, as an acquaintance and besides as someone whose ability as an elementalist she also understood, Kamito could understand the reason she wanted to scout him.

"Of course, I won't say it's for free. As a member of the Knights, you'll be paid a proper salary."

"...Why me? If you set up recruitment, won't there be girls applying?"

"We are having a recruitment, but there are practically no applicants. We had gathered people during the period the freshmen came in, but— even so, more than half had resigned immediately."

"Is that so..."

It seemed that the work of the Sylphid Knights was something greater than they had imagined. On top of the dangers, and on top of the so-called work of guarding the academy's public morals, there might also be cases where they were being looked at with hostility from the other academy students.

"Furthermore, due to the attack incident the other day, the trust in the Knights has been greatly falling. Although we got all the casualties out, in the end, we couldn't capture the assailant."

Ellis bit her lips seemingly vexed.

"I applied for the quest of arresting Jio Inzagi with the plan of overturning such assessment towards the Knights but— the result was that sorry plight. If you all didn't help at that time, we would have certainly been annihilated."

Her reddish brown pupils became wet and were slightly quivering.

Without a doubt, Ellis was enduring the voices of criticism aimed at the Knights all this time.

Surely, she was enduring it just by herself without anyone she could ask for advice.

As that was the duty of the captain, and she was condemning herself.

(...I see. She's insecure. She surely can't help but be frightened as she's insecure.)

It was the responsibility and heavy pressure that came with the position as the captain.

There should be voices of doubts being raised at her, an elementary student, serving as the captain.

She conducted herself strictly for the sake of guarding the order of the academy and might have even made enemies.

She had also been holding back those voices by displaying her ability so far.

However, that trust was swaying now.

Besides, her teammates and comrades who had always kept supporting her.

Rakka and Reishia were also not present now.

(...She is also a girl, who's yet to be sixteen.)

Being covered by her knights shoulder plate was the girl's slender shoulders.

How much of a heavy pressure was she carrying on those shoulders of hers—

"...The truth is I'm afraid."

Ellis looked downwards as she said that.

"Have I been able to do the right thing as a knight? Am I misusing the authority of the Knights and merely repressing the ones whom I should protect, with power?"

Her blue ponytail hair was swaying in the gentle breeze.

It was almost like it was revealing Ellis' heart.

"I want help" —She didn't say that.

That was surely her last strand of pride.

Kamito—

"...I got it. It'll just be until those two come back, right?"

"I-Is that alright? ...Really?"

Ellis opened her reddish brown eyes.

"Ahh."

Kamito firmly nodded once again.

Honestly, he didn't think that he'd be cut out for things like the Knights that guarded the public morals. Besides, if he considered about the Blade Dance coming in a few weeks, he shouldn't have the room to be using his time for such things.

However, upon seeing Ellis reduced to a state where she was going to be crushed at any time—

He wanted to assist this sincere but clumsy girl knight even a little.

"...Y-You have my thanks. Kazehaya Kamito."

Ellis bowed down with an expression like she's going to cry at any moment.

Kamito made a bitter smile at Ellis, who was conscientious even at such a time.

"Ahh, that's right. I have a favor to ask of you."

"What is it?"

"Err, about the remuneration you mention just now, is it possible for something like an advance?"

Part 4

Parting with Ellis, Kamito returned to the room—

Claire was wearing a cute apron and was standing in the kitchen just like in the morning.

There was a sweet yet slightly burned smell. He heard the sound of something simmering.

Quietly concealing his footsteps, Kamito approached Claire's back.

"Hn, are you making chocolate again?"

"Fuaa, Ka-Kamito!?"

Pyon, her red twin-tailed hair sprung up.

"Id-Idiot, don't startle me! I'll turn you into cinders!"

Claire's face turned bright red, and *pishi* *pishi* she swung her whip. Kamito avoided it in a fluster.

"...Good grief, where did you go? Your supplementary lecture should have been long over, right?"

"What? Are you already hungry?"

"Th-That's not the problem, you are my slave spirit, so without your master's permission, you can't totter around as you please!"

"...Am I a dog?"

Kamito breathed a sigh of disappointment.

"I went over to Ellis' place, and it resulted in me being treated to a little meal."

Pishi— Claire was petrified.

"...What...was that?"

"Ahh, it seems to be an expression of gratitude for helping her the other day. What a conscientious person."

As expected, he hid the matter about the maid uniform for the sake of Ellis' honor—

"I-I see, you were treated...really?"

Claire's face twitched.

"I also helped and yet... she only invited Kamito."

"Didn't you receive a box of cakes from the Knights? An assorted box of macaroons. If I'm not mistaken, you ate all of it by yourself."

"Th-That was certainly delicious... Eh, that's not the problem, what do you mean by you went over to Ellis' place? D-Don't tell me, you went up to her room?"

"Yeah, Ellis' room is properly tidied up. You should also follow her example—"

"I-I can't believe you...!"

Claire's slender shoulders trembled.

She tightly bit her cherry-blossom color lips, tears were slightly appearing on her ruby pupils.

"...Claire?"

"Y-You've been successfully seduced by things like Ellis' breasts and were degraded to being the Knights' dog, right?"

"No, what breasts....? Well, although, I was invited to join the Knights."

"—Huh?"

This time— Claire completely became stiff.

"Wh-What's that...? What do you mean?"

"Hn, currently, the Knights seem to be shorthanded of people. I was asked to assist them."

"O-Of course, you rejected her, right? You rejected her. ..right?"

Claire tightly grabbed Kamito's arm, and was gazing at him with a serious expression.

As Kamito scratched his head—

"No, I decided to assist them. I also have various obligations to Ellis."

"...!?"

While Claire kept hold of Kamito's arm, she was taken aback and widened her eyes.

The truth was that he had another reason to accept it but—

It was embarrassing to tell Claire that now.

"I apologize for deciding without your permission, but it's not particularly a problem, right?"

"There's no way it isn't, you know that I'm on bad terms with the Knights, right!"

"That's because you cause problems—"

Then, Kamito noticed.

Claire's fingertips that were grabbing his arm were trembling bit by bit.

"...I see, you're on Ellis' side again."

Claire calmly muttered.

"No, it's not whether I'm on her side or not—"

"...You said so, and yet."

"Eh?"

"Despite that you said— **'I'll be your contracted spirit'**."

Claire raised her face, and drops of tears overflowed from her pupils.

"Y-You..."

"That's enough, get out—"

Don— Claire thrust Kamito away.

"Hey, Claire..."

"Quickly get out! I-I hate people like you, I really hate you!"

A red hot fireball was released from Claire's palm.

"Owa!"

A showy explosion resounded, and a gaping wide hole was opened in the wall behind Kamito.

"He-Hey, wait, why are you that angry?"

"Shut up, idiot, get out——!"

This time she began reciting a spirit magic of the strongest class, so Kamito got out in a fluster.

If Claire made a serious effort, she'd be quite capable of blowing this very dormitory away.

After running to the outside of the dormitory and taking refuge, Kamito sighed.

"Wh-What on earth was that..."

Why was Claire that angry?...It was incomprehensible.

(...Is she that displeased with me joining the Knights?)

He looked up at the window of the room on the second floor, but— he didn't see Claire there.

Before long, the window's curtains were closed.

(...Ahh, if she's become like this, she won't listen.)

Claire Rouge. She was a girl almost like a blazing flame.

(Well, however, that's the part that suits her best...)

Kamito took a deep sigh once again—

He left behind the Raven Class dormitory with heavy footsteps.

Part 5

After chasing Kamito out—

"I hate that guy, I hate that guy... I hate him so much!"

Claire fell onto the bed.

Pressing her soft pillow onto her cheeks, she tightly grabbed her sheets.

Scarlet turned up seemingly worried, but Claire drove her away without a word. She didn't want even her

contracted spirit, who had been with her all this time from when she was young, to see her crying face now.

"What... I look like a fool."

For several days, she had been practicing how to make chocolate all this time.

(I-It's of course out of obligation. The chocolate that I'll give him out of obligation.)

The practicing had effect, as she had been gradually been able to make them well.

Although she had stopped making a large amount of cinders, it should be good enough for her to be praised.

On the actual day, tomorrow morning, she planned to give Kamito the chocolate that she made the most well-done.

"You did well." ...She wanted to be praised.

(And yet, he...)

Claire groaned, and struck her pillow. *Posu posu*.

(...The meal that Ellis made is certainly better than things like my chocolate.)

It was vexing. Her mind was jumbled up, and although she didn't understand what was vexing, it was vexing.

"...I'm such a detestable person."

She understood. She definitely had no ill feelings towards Kamito. Really, there was no doubt that he merely thought of being helpful to Ellis and decided to join the Knights.

He was that kind of person.

Even Claire did not particularly hate Ellis. Of course, they weren't on good terms, but she recognized that she was a proud elementalist.

However, it made her very angry for some reason.

(...Why?)

She understood the reason.

She had been thinking that she was the more special being to Kamito.

(After all, he had said that he would be my contracted spirit.)

Pressing softly on her lips with her fingertip, her cheeks quickly became hot.

(Besides, w-we even... kissed.)

It became a painful feeling like her chest was tightly constricted.

(...But, that's wrong.)

It did not mean that only Claire was particularly special.

As long as there were girls being troubled, he would extend his hand to anyone, no matter who.

(It's because I'm that Calamity Queen's sister—)

He might just think that her circumstances were pitiful , and was just sympathizing with her.

Upon thinking that, Claire became excessively lonely.

Kamito surely didn't understand why Claire was that angry.

Claire also didn't clearly understand why she got such feelings.

Her current feelings were almost like the smoldering fire of a hearth.

...These weren't Claire Rouge's flames.

At that time, there was the sound of the room's door opening.

"Kamito!?"

Claire energetically lifted her face from her pillow, but —

The one, who was there, was Fianna with a puzzled expression.

It seemed like she had returned from her shopping duty for dinner.

Claire covered her face with her pillow in a fluster. She didn't want her to see her tear-stained face.

Fianna took a look at Claire's current state— and seemed to have guessed the situation somehow.

"Ehh, you quarreled with Kamito?"

"...Go away."

Keeping her face covered in the pillow, Claire said.

Fianna sighed, sat on the bed and placed her hand on Claire's head.

"I said leave me alone, didn't I"

"You're really a kid. Vastly different from Rubia-sama."

"Either way, I'm different from nee-sama."

Claire retorted peevishly.

"Hey, Claire, why don't you be a little more honest?"

"I-I apologize that I'm not honest... After all, even my breasts are small."

"Huh? Nobody said anything about breast, you know? "

As Fianna softly brushed Claire's head like a kitten, she sighed.

"What do we do about dinner?"

Part 6

At that very moment— Ellis was rolling on her bed in agony.

"..., I-I was wearing such an embarrassing attire."

She spread the maid uniform she wore just now, and bashfully blushed. Even if it was for the sake of rewarding him for her debt of gratitude, this was, as expected, overkill, wasn't it?

"B-But..."

Ellis tightly grasped the maid uniform—

"Kamito said that it suited me... "

Recalling it, her cheeks reflexively relaxed.

Ellis opened her eyes as she was taken aback, and slapped her cheeks with both hands.

"I-I'm the Captain! If I'm not firm, I can't be an example to everyone!"

A knight of the Fahrengart family must never show her weaknesses.

Ellis Fahrengart had always done so.

However—

(I've shown it to him...)

She had never even shown that side of hers, which was frightened by insecurity, in front of the comrades she trusted.

Truthfully, she had no intention of inviting Kamito to the Knights— until that moment.

However, when she saw his back as he was about to leave, she subconsciously called out to him.

(...I wonder why? I also don't understand it well myself.)

In the beginning, she had been thinking that things like male elementalists were an enemy, who would disrupt the public morals of the academy.

Since when did she, so strangely, start caring about him?

When she thought about Kazehaya Kamito, her chest constricted and hurt for some reason.

Such a feeling was a first for Ellis, who was raised up as a knight.

Incidentally, she glanced at the top of the table.

A nicely wrapped-up chocolate was lying there.

Tomorrow was the «Valentia Holy Festival».

The day to give chocolate to the opposite sex that held a place in one's mind—

(...I-It's a gift for enrolling into the Knights. Naturally, there's no other meaning than that.)

Ellis groaned spontaneously.

If that was the case, she shouldn't be that tensed, but the throbbing in her chest wouldn't stop for some reason.

(...Wh-When would it be good to hand it over?)

After all, it was the first time she was doing such a thing, so she didn't know what she should do.

"...H-He wouldn't think that I'm a strange girl, right?"

"—What's strange, Ellis?"

Suddenly, a voice like frozen cold air was heard.

"...!?"

Before she knew it, the room's door was opened—

And, over there— she was standing.

She had shiny blonde hair and cool-headed ice-blue pupils.

"Ah, Aneue[5]...!"

"What kind of cowardly face are you making? And yet you call yourself a knight of the Fahrengart family?"

She was the academy's strongest elementalist—Velsaria Eva Fahrengart.

Chapter 5: Sylphid Knights

Part 1

"...chan, please wake up."

He heard somebody's voice...

"...chan, onii-chan."

"Uh..."

Kamito rubbed his eyes as he slowly got up.

His back hurt. The muscles of his stiff joints were screaming.

"Hn..."

Feeling the hard sensation in his palms—

Kamito finally remembered.

Last night, he was driven out of the room by Claire, so he had reluctantly decided to sleep near the forest.

(...Eh, onii-chan?)

With his still-half-awakened consciousness, Kamito tilted his head.

Naturally, Kamito, who was an orphan, didn't have things like a sister.

After blinking his eyes several times, he suddenly shifted his focus to his side—

"Have you finally woken up, onii-chan?"

"E-Est!?"

A beautiful girl, fully nude save for knee-socks, was looking into Kamito's face expressionlessly.

She had a slim slender body. Morning dew wetted her milky skin and was shining.

"Wh-What's the matter?! Weren't you sleeping in Claire's room!?"

Kamito, whose face turned bright red, averted his eyes from the girl's gentle-sloping breasts in a fluster.

"In order for onii-chan to not freeze to death, I've been sleeping together with you and warming you up."

"...Th-That's a lie, right?"

"Did my thighs feel good, onii-chan?"

"...Guaa."

Kamito was greatly perplexed and groaned.

"By the way, since just now, what's with the 'onii-chan' ?"

"Yes well, I tried using various ways of calling to wake you up, but you did not wake up at all, so Est tried calling you onii-chan. When I did that, Kamito immediately woke up."

"Is that true...?"

"Yes, onii-chan."

"Est, spare me the 'onii-chan'."

"Yes, onii-chan."

Est nodded expressionlessly.

"...Est. By any chance, are you angry?"

"..."

Est stared at Kamito with her mysterious violet pupils.

"I am Kamito's contracted spirit, you know."

"Eh?"

Est softly pressed her index finger onto Kamito's lips.

"Kamito, please promise me that you won't leave me behind as you please."

"..."

It seemed like she was angry about being left behind in Claire's room.

As for Kamito, he had just thought that it was pitiful to make her sleep outside with him, but—

"...Ahh, I got it. Sorry."

"It's a promise, Kamito."

Kamito entwined his pinky around Est's stretched out pinky and promised.

"—Well then, I have to go to Ellis' place."

The academy also had a day off today because of « Valentia Holy Festival» but there was a meeting being held.

Kamito had just decided to join the Knights, but it seemed like he had to work immediately from today.

"Let's go, Est."

"Okay, Kamito."

Est tightly grasped Kamito's hand, who had stood up.

Part 2

The Sylphid Knights' morning was early.

Even if it was the day that the academy had a holiday, there was a Knights' general meeting early in the morning.

Kamito turned up at the headquarters of the Sylphid Knights in accordance with the time he heard from Ellis.

The headquarters of the Knights was a staggeringly splendid building remodeled from an old cathedral. Considering that there were about twenty members, it might be a little too spacious.

Kamito took a breath, and pushed open the heavy steel door.

"Wh—?"

Kamito left the door open and froze for a few seconds.

It was full of girls in their underwear inside the holy cathedral.

There were girls who had just begun removing their skirts and girls who had their hands at their bra hooks.

"...!"

Ellis, who had pulled her stockings up to her knees, was widely opening her reddish brown eyes.

Her adult-like black lingerie was clearly etched into his retina.

And then—

"Gyaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Kamito received dozens of blasts of spirit magic on his body, and was even blown out of the other side of the door.

"...I see that I had taken the Knights' harshness lightly."

Kamito, whose whole body got shredded and tattered, glared at Ellis with scornful eyes.

Incidentally, the one who released the most powerful spirit magic, was this very Ellis.

If he wasn't wearing his highly blade-proof and impact-proof academy uniform, he certainly would have turned into pieces by the wild flying blades of wind.

Ellis awkwardly averted her eyes—

"Sorry. I should have told you this first. We always change our clothes here."

"Why don't you use the changing room?"

"That's because there was no need to. So far, we haven't had a male student."

"That is so, but..."

"Well, that's that. It suits you rather well, doesn't it, Kamito."

Ellis coughed in order to dodge the question.

Kamito attached a badge, which was engraved with the portrait of the wind Elemental Lord.

Since the Knights' armors were for female use only, it had been decided that he would attach this badge instead .

The Knights' girls were lined up horizontally in front of Kamito and Est.

There were twenty members all together. There also seemed to be several upperclassmen among them.

Before starting the Knights general meeting, Ellis was going to introduce Kamito.

"He'll be attached to the Knights starting from today, he's Kazehaya Kamito from the Raven Class. As you can see, he's a male elementalist, but I want you to welcome him without being afraid."

"..."

The Knights' girls were—

Glaring at Kamito with eyes discerning a suspicious person.

...It was understandable. Due to the incident just now, the impression Kamito made was the worst.

"Is that the rumored demon king of the night?" "I can't believe it, he made such a small girl into his lover..."

"However, isn't he a little good-looking?" "Don't be deceived, despite his appearance, he's a terrible pervert." "Even just now, he was looking at us like he ran his tongue all over our underwear."

...Those were the whispering voices of the girls that he heard.

"Hey, Ellis...my heart seems to be broken from the first day."

"I-It's alright. I know that you are not such a boy. If you display the part where you work as a splendid Knight, things like dishonorable rumors would instantly vanish."

"...That would be great if that was the case."

Although Kamito appreciated Ellis cheering him, he let out a heavy sigh.

Part 3

The Knights' general meeting started.

What was being told from Ellis' mouth was about the special quest for the Valentia Holy Festival.

"Today, the academy lectures are cancelled. Many academy students would end up flocking to the town because of the Valentia Holy Festival. In order to prevent dueling incidents from occurring in front of ordinary townspeople, all members, be cautious and take on the quest."

"Yes!"

The Knights girls all replied at once.

They were few in number, but they were superior elementalists. As expected, their morale was high.

However— there also seemed to be people harboring dissatisfaction about Ellis taking command among the upperclassmen.

Kamito didn't miss the fact that several people were plainly making seemingly dissatisfied faces.

(...I see, this is why Ellis also has it tough.)

It was the jealousy towards their junior, whose pedigree and ability was superior.

Sylphid Knights, which looked well-ordered, seemed to have various things going on internally.

However, Ellis ignored those upperclassmen and continued.

"Those Cursed Armament Seal merchants — Corpse Federation's people (Murders)— seemed to have infiltrated into the Academy Town. They may be plotting to use this chance for some sort of contact with the academy students that are going out into the town. If you catch them in the act, please deal with it with your own judgment. Well then, dismiss—"

"—Hold on!"

Suddenly a sharp voice came from behind Kamito.

The steel door was forcefully and cleanly pushed open, and daylight shone in at once.

"...!?"

All of them were taken aback and turned around.

The one standing before the door was— a knight of a beautiful face with the appearance of an ice sculpture.

She had brilliant shiny blonde hair and cold piercing ice blue pupils. She was wearing a pure white overcoat on top of her uniform— it was a prestige overcoat that only the academy's top ranker was allowed to wear.

(The academy's strongest elementalist— Velsaria Eva.)

Something chilly ran through Kamito's spine. She, who he had faced at the arena at the Blade Dance three years ago, shouldn't have this much of a sense of intimidation.

Velsaria made a sound with her hard iron shoes and slowly walked over.

"Aneue, why are you here...!"

"It seems that the pawns have decreased considerably in numbers during the time I was absent."

"Aneue... did you say something just now?"

"I said the pawns have decreased. That's all."

"...!"

Ellis sternly lifted her eyebrows at Velsaria's spoken harsh remark.

"Are you calling the comrades of the Knights pawns?!"

"Pawns are pawns— Furthermore, they are useless sacrificial pawns. Without even being able to capture just one assailant, they were completely defeated on the contrary."

"It doesn't matter to me. However, I would like you to stop insulting the girls, who splendidly carried out their duties. Even if you are the former captain."

Velsaria looked down on Ellis, who protested, with her cold piercing eyes.

"I am a Fahrengart knight, I have never taken back words I have said."

"You...!"

"Or, you could try making me yield with brute force, Captain?"

Velsaria's thin fingers got hold of Ellis' chin.

"...!?"

Being overwhelmed by her stern gaze, Ellis spontaneously averted her eyes.

Velsaria shook her head like she was disappointed.

"Ellis, it was a mistake to entrust you with the Knights."

"—Wait."

Kamito grasped Velsaria's arm from the side.

He thought that he shouldn't meddle into the Knights' problems, but— getting Ellis involved was, as expected, something he couldn't stay silent about.

"When Jio Inzagi attacked the academy, Ellis rushed over there the fastest and fought. You don't have the right to condemn Ellis."

"Ka-Kamito..."

Ellis widened her eyes in shock.

"—Oh?"

Velsaria quickly released her hand from Ellis' chin.

"You're the male elementalist, who's said to have been admitted here with Lady Greyworth's recommendation, right?"

"Yes, so what of it?"

Kamito directly glared back at her cold piercing ice blue eyes.

"The one who captured that assailant was you, is that right?"

"It wasn't just me. The reason I won was because I fought together with the comrades of my team."

"Don't be modest. I can't understand why you're hiding your strength, but—"

Velsaria's sharp discernment shot through Kamito.

(...This person, don't tell me she knows my true identity?)

Cold sweat surfaced on Kamito's forehead.

...No, that couldn't be it. The time he met her was three years ago. Kamito's current looks should be very different from the time, when he was an innocent boy.

Velsaria—

"Your true strength is something I want to test out by all means."

"...What?"

Suddenly, one of her hands was raised overhead.

"...!?"

At that moment, a tremendous shock was radially released!

There was a thunderous sound as the whole cathedral shook.

The girls in the surroundings were blown away by the shock and thrown onto the wall.

There was a cloud of dust densely hanging over and marble tiles that were cruelly flipped up.

It was the spirit magic of the earth attribute— considering that its recital time was almost zero, it was of extraordinary power.

The ones that could avoid the shock— were only Ellis and several upperclassmen.

Kamito covered for Est and had taken the spirit magic flat on directly.

As he had reacted, he didn't collapse but his uniform was worn-out.

"You, what are you doing...?"

"Hmm, surprisingly, some remained."

Velsaria calmly moved her hand to her chin, and looked around in order to glare at the girls.

And then—

"You and you, and then... you two."

She nominated the four knights, who were standing without falling, one by one.

"Aneue, what on earth are you planning?!"

Enraged, Ellis drew closer to Velsaria.

"I'm making my selection. The people whom I nominated just now will be admitted into my team."

"Such a selfish thing—"

Her selection— was trying to headhunt the members of the Knights, which had few people even during normal circumstances.

Ellis could not stay silent.

"I don't intend to force them. It's all up to their own will to decide."

"Wh—?"

Ellis became taken aback and looked at the four nominated upperclassmen.

The four bewilderedly mutually exchanged glances, but—

"Y-Yes...!"

"It's an honor to be selected into Velsaria-dono's team!"

"Please include me by all means."

"M-Me too!"

They replied all together unanimously.

"...!"

Ellis chewed her lips, seemingly vexed.

She couldn't condemn the girls.

To be admitted into the team of the academy's strongest elementalist —ranking number one, Velsaria— was almost the same as obtaining a guaranteed ticket into the Blade Dance.

That temptation was too great, certainly because they were powerful people.

Besides, the girls were upperclassmen— members of the Knights when Velsaria was captain. In that case, they might be smoldering dissatisfaction from the start at the matter that Ellis was the captain like Kamito imagined just now.

"..."

As expected, it was probably awkward, so the girls didn't try to look at Ellis' face.

Velsaria faced toward Kamito.

"You surprised me— you had the time to cover for your contracted spirit with that distance. How about it, won't you join my team too. You seem to be able to at least be my outrider."

"I refuse. I'm with the hellcat ojou-sama's team."

Kamito glared back at Velsaria.

"«Team Scarlet»— Calamity Queen's sister's team that is currently in sixth place? Well, that's fine, if you won't be my pawn, then I'll just have to crush you."

Velsaria averted her line of sight as she lost interest—

And signaled the girls she headhunted from the Knights with her eyes.

As she made the clacking steel shoe sounds, she left the headquarters building.

Later—

The only things that remained were a cruelly up-turned mountain of rubble, plus Ellis and her comrades, in a dumbfounded state.

Part 4

(No matter what, it doesn't hurt...)

Velsaria, who left the Sylphid Knights building, distorted her expression in pain.

The throbbing was fast. The «Heart» was pounding like it went crazy.

(I thought that I had already gotten used to this «Heart» but—)

She had not yet reached the point of fully controlling it.

She couldn't hold back the destructive impulses that were spurring her on from the depths of her body.

Or, even her very own consciousness might already have begun to be corroded.

(However, that's fine. If it wasn't like that, it would be meaningless—)

What was important was the infinite divine power that the «Heart» brought about with it.

As long as she had this «Heart»— she could win.

Ren Ashbell

Against that girl— The Strongest Blade Dancer, who defeated her.

Suddenly, a dark flame lit within Velsaria's cold eyes.

(However, that male elementalist— Kazehaya Kamito or so he was called?)

Those black pupils that directly glared at Velsaria.

Within those eyes— existed something familiar.

(They look similar...)

They were the same eyes as the girl three years ago.

However, there were parts that were definitely different.

Kazehaya Kamito turned his hostility-filled gaze at Velsaria.

(—She's different. **She wasn't even looking at me**.)

She thought nothing about Velsaria, who was her competitor.

She was looking at something much further away.

"..."

—The Blade Dance would start a few weeks later.

Finally, her rematch with her, which was her dearest wish, would come true.

"Just wait, Ren Ashbell—"

As Velsaria felt the throbbing of the raging «Heart», she ground her molars.

Chapter 6: Security of Academy Town

Part 1

Members of The Knights formed units of two-men-cells or three-men-cells depending on their abilities.

For the time being, Kamito, the newcomer, had formed a unit with Ellis, the Captain.

Although, rather than Kamito being a newcomer, this was because not a single girl wanted to form a unit with Kamito.

The Knights' work covered a lot of areas, more than Kamito had anticipated.

There was the mediation of duels of academy students, the exposing of traders smuggling sealed spirits, the safeguarding of spirits gone astray, the negotiations between student organizations, the rescuing of stranded people— The most frequent quest was the subjugation of beasts and rampaging spirits that passed through naturally occurring «Gates» in the Spirit Forest and came intruding from Astral Zero. Receiving a report that a

large beast seemed to be rampaging outside the town this time as well, the two of them moved quickly to the scene.

Mowing down the trees of the forest, a large beast, wearing a gigantic shell, roared.

It was a beast like a spider cross-bred with a gigantic tortoise.

"What a pretty large prey, how big was the «Gate» that opened?"

"According to the Spirit Investigation Association's announcement, the size of the «Gates» appearing in the Spirit Forest seem to be getting bigger yearly. The reasons seem to be unknown."

Ellis nodded with a serious expression, and armed her elemental waffe «Ray Hawk».

It was his first time fighting side by side with Ellis like this but he knew her real ability.

Claire was more skilled in terms of her sense in flexible tactics, but in contrast with her, who would be moody and erratic, Ellis could fight in a steady way. With just the basics and without playing with shortcuts or tricks,

she would force one to yield directly from the front. It was indeed an Ellis-like battle style.

"Now, Kamito!"

Matching up with Ellis attacking from the sky, Kamito plunged close towards the beast.

The shell creature's vital point was its soft abdomen. That's the same even for a beast.

Kamito kicked the ground with the elemental waffe sword in his hand.

At that moment, the beast's abdomen split vertically.

Appearing from its stomach was the head of a giant snake. Widely opening its mouth with sharp fangs, it swooped down at Kamito. The snake wriggling on the ground rolled up a large amount of sand and dirt.

"...What an absurd living thing, this beast is."

As Kamito dodged the beast's violent attack, he clicked his tongue.

Clad in the divine protection of her wind spirit and flying up in midair, Ellis released the blades of wind.

However, as if some magic effect was running— the blades were repelled by its hard shell.

Don. Ellis landed next to Kamito.

"What a nuisance, that shell seems to be strengthened by spirit magic of the resistance attribute."

"Spirit magic? Who on earth—"

"There is the possibility that this beast didn't come from a naturally occurring «Gate» and was summoned by somebody. In addition to the chaotic Valentia Holy Festival, they caused a disturbance outside of Academy Town and are probably trying to distract the Knights' attention."

Hearing this, Kamito got it.

"It's the Cursed Armament Seal smugglers who had infiltrated into Academy Town, right?"

"There's the possibility."

Ellis nodded with a stern expression.

The beast mowed down the trees of the forest and roared like it went mad.

With Ray Hawk in her hand, Ellis took a stance for an attack.

"Kamito, we'll do a coordinated attack. Let's bring it down in the next attack."

"Ah, I got it."

The striking-like attack of the beast came.

Ellis recited the flying spirit magic at high speed, grabbed Kamito's arm and flew up.

Upon flying up right above the beast, she quickly released her hand holding Kamito.

"Let's go Est!"

Responding to Kamito's shout, the elemental waffe — Terminus Est— shone dazzlingly.

It was a nose dive attack from the sky. A technique that was Ellis' specialty.

Along with the force of falling, the silver sword pierced into the shell.

Crack— A dry sound was heard, and a crack had opened, traversing across the beast's hard shell.

Immediately after.

"Haaaaa!"

Ellis, who continued on and nosed dived, aimed at the crack that had appeared on its shell and thrust in her Ray Hawk!

"—Go and rampage, evil winds!"

At the moment she shouted the words of releasing.

The large frame of the beast greatly sprung up in a jolt, and it let out a roar of agony upon its imminent death and became silent.

The violent winds raging inside its body had sliced and ripped its internal organs into pieces.

"For our first time, it was a coordination of precise timing."

Kamito pulled out Est, that was pierced into the shell, as he said that.

"Ahh, I may have a good compatibility with you... th-this is only as far as battles are concerned!"

Ellis swiftly turned red and turned away abruptly.

Part 2

Even after the extermination of the beast in the Spirit Forest, the two of them were led around by incidents unexpectedly happening one by one.

Since there were many students out in town, due to the academy lectures being cancelled, trouble wouldn't seem to cease more than usual.

The part, where the number of Knights members decreased due to the headhunting this morning, also spurred on the business.

Time flew by while they were settling the unexpected incidents, and soon it was afternoon.

The Valentia Holy Festival began from the afternoon onwards.

As the mayor's speech seemed to be on the plaza's side , the townspeople's feet had been naturally going towards that direction.

"How dreadful, the Knights' work is."

As Kamito surveyed the state of the street springing with excitement in the preparation of the festival, he muttered.

"Still , it was special this morning. Besides, the part where the upperclassmen knights were headhunted, hurt . I've caused trouble for you right from your first day, I'm sorry."

Ellis dropped her shoulders, feeling dejected, and sighed.

She seemed to be depressed because of this morning's incident.

"Ellis, it's not that that was your fault, you know?"

"No, the fact that I couldn't restrain them is my responsibility."

Ellis slowly shook her head.

"Those four upperclassmen were Knights members from the time when Aneue was the captain. Most of the upperclassmen had resigned the moment I was selected to be the captain. Only they had remained so far, but—they ran out of patience with me, who lacks the ability as the captain."

"Ellis..."

"That reminds me, it was just a few weeks ago when you came here."

Ellis gave a talk about the Sylphid Knights from a year ago to Kamito.

The Sylphid Knights, when Velsaria was the captain, operated with iron rules and seemed to be an even-stronger organization as compared to now. They had the perfect efficient doctrine. The people, who violated even the group's rules, were punished right on the spot, and the academy students, who caused problems, were mercilessly beaten up with the armed power of the Knights.

Naturally, the academy rules seemed to have been kept well.

However, Velsaria's severe methods invited opposition from the academy students, who were highly-prideful noble girls, and before long, she had to step down from her position as captain.

Although she was the eldest daughter of the prestigious Fahrengart Duke Family, it might, after all, be the fact that she was no more than an adopted child of a lower class noble, or probably the cause of stirring animosity with the nobles, who honored their pedigree.

The one, who was elected to be that girl's successor, was Ellis of the same Fahrengart Family.

"In the past, Aneue was a splendid knight, whom I admired."

Ellis strongly bit her lips.

"She was a strict cold person, but she wasn't a person who would crush everything with power that way. Her current self is no longer the knight I aim to be."

Kamito remembered the spirit crystal he saw in Ellis' room yesterday.

The Velsaria in Ellis' memory had a completely different atmosphere as hers from this morning.

He felt it when he confronted her, that intimidating air that's even ominous.

(What on earth changed her like that?—)

Then, at that moment.

Gyururu.

There was the rumbling sound of a stomach..

"Ellis?"

"I-It isn't me!?"

Ellis turned bright red and denied.

Kamito made a wry smile.

"It's because we've been working since morning. The truth is that I'm also starving. Since it's almost time to change shifts, shall we have lunch or something?"

"Gu... E-Even though I'm saying that's not it."

Ignoring Ellis, who puffed out her cheeks, Kamito looked around his surroundings.

As there was the Valentia Holy Festival, there were many confection stores, but there were also plenty of street stalls selling other food. There was fried bread covered with sugar, a certain cuisine —wrapped in pie dough with vegetables and minced meat and baked— and grilled meat on skewers. ...Even if Ellis' hadn't, his stomach would have probably rumbled.

"Are you going to buy something at the stall? Or, are you going into a restaurant somewhere?"

"Mm, no, err..."

Thereupon, Ellis suddenly began to fidget for some reason.

"T-The truth is... I've made something though."

"Uh?"

Then, out of nowhere, a demon wind spirit in the form of an eagle came flying over.

It was Ellis' demon wind spirit Simorgh. It was holding onto a large basket in its claws.

"As expected."

Kamito was impressed.

To even make a bento herself, she was truly a capable ojou-sama.

"Well then, I'm going to buy something at the stall."

"W-Wa-Wa-Wait!"

Ellis caught hold of Kamito's neck as he was about to walk off.

"Wh-What?"

"Th-There's also your share..."

"Eh?"

"S-So, I'm saying that I also made your share!"

"My share?"

"Y-Yeah, because whether I make one or two, the time taken doesn't change that much. D-Don't misunderstand, I only made it because it would be wasteful to have ingredients left over!"

"I thank you for that. Ellis' bento is something I could look forward to."

"Mu[6], if you look forward to it that much, I'll feel troubled."

"Ahem", Ellis' cheeks reddened as she coughed.

"Well then, shall we find some place we can settle down somewhere—"

Ellis looked around the vicinity, and—

"Ah, Captain, there you are, shall we have lunch together?"

"Wh—!?"

While waving their hands on the opposite side of the road, a group of three girls came running over with the sound of their light footsteps.

All of them were Sylphid Knight members, who put on lightweight armor on top of their uniforms.

"Y-You girls, what about your patrol of the town?!"

"It's currently the time for the Ryuska-unit to be responsible for the patrol. After that, I had thought of having lunch with everyone. Captain, how about having it together with us?"

"Err, I have a prior commitment with Kamito—"

"Ah, how sly. Captain, you're planning to take hold of Kamito all by yourself!"

"Abuse of authority—"

"Captain, you perv!"

The three girls criticized Ellis simultaneously.

"I'm not taking hold of Kamito all by myself or something!"

Ellis turned bright red and flared up.

"Isn't that fine? You know, I couldn't do a self-introduction properly this morning, after all."

"Th-That was so, but, however..."

Ellis sighed, and—

"...I understand. Well then, let's have lunch with everyone."

"Mu", she glared at Kamito with a reproachful-like look and nodded.

Part 3

Just like that, they ended up having lunch at a nearby park.

It was a lushly-green natural park near the plaza.

Within the busy town it was only quiet here, because of the Valentia Holy Festival preparations.

The Knights girls sat on top of the lawn, and opened their lunch boxes.

The three of theirs were sandwiches, but only Ellis' was different.

"Oh? That's amazingly extravagant."

"...I-Is that so? B-But it's nothing special, it's the same as usual."

Kamito raised his voice in admiration, and Ellis looked downwards as she was a little embarrassed.

There were potato-salad sandwiches, sausages, fried eggs, fruits that were cut into perfectly shaped sizes and more placed inside the slightly large lunch box.

"Lies, you usually only have peanut butter sandwiches , and yet—"

"The apples are also cut nicely into the shape of Mr. Rabbits!"

"The sausages are also made into Mr. Octopuses!"

Being glared at motionlessly with scornful eyes by the three girls, Ellis ended up being overwhelmed.

"Y-You girls too—"

Dodging the question, she faced the three and thrust her index finger out sternly.

"Despite being afraid of Kamito this morning, what on earth is with this turn of events?"

"..."

As a matter of fact, that was also bothering Kamito.

The reputation Kamito had from being a male elementalist in an academy of boxed-in ojou-samas was

extremely bad. There were things like pervert, licentious beast, demon king of the night... Cruel misunderstandings were being made.

Furthermore, although there were circumstances, he had even seen the girls changing clothes this morning.

His first impression was supposed to be the worst.

The three of them mutually looked at each other's faces , and made a bewildered-like face.

"U-Um... Honestly, I'm still a little afraid."

"When I saw Captain talking normally to him, I thought he isn't such a bad person or something."

"Besides, he opposed that Velsaria head-on, how amazing."

The three of them placed both hands on their cheeks, and their faces slightly reddened for some reason.

Ellis slightly and sullenly pulled her lips back and pouted at such an appearance from the three of them.

"It's nothing, I just didn't like her."

Kamito agilely picked up a sandwich made by Ellis.

It was a ham-and-egg sandwich. The pepper was working, and it had a simple yet very pleasant seasoning.

"Delicious. To be able to make such a simple thing delicious is proof of your excellent skills."

"R-Really? ...That's great."

Ellis took a breath of relief.

"D-Don't hold back, eat up!"

"Ah, well then, I shan't hold back—"

Kamito was about to toss the sandwich into his mouth, and at that moment.

Nom.

The sandwich in his hand suddenly disappeared.

Nom nom.

"...Est, what are you doing?"

Est had returned to her human form from the sword and was beside him.

"Kamito, I'm also hungry. Feed me please."

"...It can't be helped, come on."

Kamito made a wry smile as he reached out to the sandwich.

He tore it into small pieces so that it'd be easy to eat, and threw it into Est's mouth.

Nom nom.

Chewing the bread expressionlessly, Est was almost like a small animal.

"Uh, Kamito, Th-That's the sandwiches I made for you, you know."

Ellis puffed her cheeks out with a "hmph".

"Ah, Est-chan is cute ~ "

"I also want to feed her!"

"Eat my sandwich, eat my sandwich too!"

The three Knights girls presented Est with food one after another.

Nom. *Nom nom*.

"As I thought she's a great one revered by humans."

"...No, she's completely being fed like an animal, you know?"

"Fua..."

Soon, Est made a lovely yawn, and threw herself onto Kamito's lap.

When he thought that she would instantly be making sweet sleeping-breaths—

Her body turned into particles of light, vanished into an empty space and returned back into her original sword form.

"Ah, she turned back into a sword..."

One of the girls muttered, seemingly disappointed.

"She ate all she could eat and went to sleep."

As Kamito placed Est back into the sword belt on his waist, he shrugged his shoulders in exasperation.

Est, who was detached from her Astral Zero body, was different from other contracted spirits, normally she would be spending almost the whole day in a sleeping state. Once she fell into this state, she pretty much wouldn't wake up.

After that, he ate the sandwiches as the time passed quietly.

The topics, which were brought up, were about the endless lectures and the books they read recently.

The Knights girls seemed tense about talking to Kamito but, a short while later, they had gradually opened their hearts. ...However, Ellis was making a face like she was not amused for some reason.

(Nevertheless—)

There was something Kamito suddenly noticed while the girls were talking.

"Even though you're in the Knights, all of you are normal girls?"

"Fue~?"

The three of them had their faces slightly reddened at the same time.

"Erm... N-Normal girls? Wh-What...do...you...mean?"

"Err, I certainly thought that you all would be like Ellis ."

"Kamito, what do you mean by that?"

Ellis was sullenly glaring at him.

"Err, more strict, or rather, capable or something—"

"It was like that before. People like us would be discharged after all."

One of the three girls muttered.

"Yeah, it was the time when Velsaria was captain."

"She suppressed everything with power, honestly, the atmosphere in the academy wasn't good."

The other two also nodded their heads together. As they were members that joined after Ellis was inaugurated as captain, they seemed to be dissatisfied with former captain Velsaria's way of doing things.

"Was there no one, who would oppose Velsaria?"

The ones attending the academy were mostly highly-prideful daughters of nobles.

If they were suppressed by power like that, there should also be many people opposing her.

"—Of course, there were. Several people too."

Ellis cut into the conversation.

"However, even the most superior class upperclassman wasn't a threat to Aneue. In the end, the reason that Aneue stepped down from the duty of captain was because of the pressure from influential nobles."

"The ones, who rebelled against Velsaria to the very end were roughly those from the Raven Class. Especially hellcat Claire Rouge, even the Knights at that time seemed to have gotten their hands burnt."

"Well, but Claire Rouge is still a problem child now."

"...I see."

The confrontation between Claire and the Knights seemed to be something from the time before Ellis was inaugurated as captain.

Suddenly, Claire's face from yesterday came into Kamito's mind.

(...Is she still angry?)

Listening to the current conversation, Kamito also reconsidered that his explanation wasn't sufficient.

Since there was such a discord, it was also natural that she got angry after hearing that Kamito joined the Knights.

The truth was that he thought of looking into her room in the morning, but he was so extremely busy with the Knights work that he couldn't meet her.

—Just at that moment.

"Hn?"

Something passed by near his field of vision.

Kamito blinked and squinted.

It was the main street of town that could be seen from the park.

A small red tail was in sight among the teeming hustle and bustle.

(...Is that Scarlet?)

Scarlet was skillfully making its way through the congestion, as it seemed to be walking to somewhere.

Claire wasn't seen beside it.

(What is it doing?)

Then, like it noticed Kamito's gaze—

Scarlet instantly stopped and turned around towards him.

After that, it immediately disappeared into the congestion.

(...Is it telling me to follow it?)

"What's the matter, Kamito?"

"Sorry, I remembered that I've got a slight errand to do . I'll come back quickly."

Chasing after Scarlet's tail, which disappeared among the hustle and bustle, Kamito ran off.

Part 4

"Come on, Scarlet, where the heck did you go?!"

Claire ruffled up her red twin tails, and was furiously angry.

The moment they walked into town, she ended up separated from Scarlet, and before she knew it, she got lost in some back alley.

Claire, who usually didn't go out to Academy Town, was virtually unfamiliar with the area. Also, Scarlet didn't seem to have returned to Astral Zero, so she couldn't even summon it.

There were no signs of people in the back alley. The Valentia Holy Festival seemed to be beginning over at the plaza, everyone had been gathering over there.

"...What's with this, aaah."

Claire restlessly looked around her surroundings, seemingly in anxiety.

Of course, hoodlums and the like were no match for Claire, an elementalist. Nevertheless, she somehow ended up feeling uneasy.

"...That guy too, he completely didn't return!"

Claire irritably made a *snap* sound with her whip.

To begin with, the reason Claire had gone out to town was for the sake of finding Kamito.

She had waited throughout the whole night yesterday, but Kamito didn't return in the end.

"What...? Despite the fact that I'd have forgiven you if you'd have honestly apologized."

Claire had also reflected a little about the part where she chased Kamito out without hearing his story out fully.

She absolutely couldn't forgive him for being in Ellis' room, but still, without saying cinders, she had planned on letting it end with him being about half-burnt at most.

(...Only for once, only once, I'll forgive him for swinging his tail at Ellis, despite his slave spirit social standing. I'm really tolerant, almost like a saint.)

Brushing her twin-tailed red hair quickly, Claire took out a small pouch from her uniform's pocket. It was a lovely pouch coiled with a yellow ribbon.

Inside were handmade chocolates.

Due to practicing over several times, she finally could make something that wasn't cinders.

"I-If he obediently apologized, I'd give him this as a reward. This is at most a reward. It has nothing to do with stuff like the Valentia Holy Festival."

Claire was muttering alone, when—

"Nyaa?"

"Hiwaa!"

Claire sprung up with shock.

When she turned around in a fluster, Scarlet had tilted its head to the side near her feet.

"A-Ahh, don't scare me! ...Good grief, you got lost as soon as we got here."

The one, who had been lost, was Claire, but she didn't admit that.

At that time, running footsteps were drawing closer from the other side of the alley.

"Claire!"

"...?"

Claire turned around, and the one that appeared from the corner of the alley was Kamito.

He was very out of breath, like he has been running for some time.

"Ka-Kamito! Why—"

"I caught sight of Scarlet's silhouette, and chased it here."

"Eh?"

(D-Does that mean he came looking for me?)

Claire made an angry-like, troubled-like, happy-like ambiguous face.

For the time being, as they were still in the middle of a quarrel, she didn't know what kind of expression she should be making.

(Th-That's right, I can't be making a sweet face here!)

The highly-prideful Claire had absolutely no intention of forgiving him until an apology came from Kamito. For the master to be apologizing to the slave was something that could absolutely not happen.

"Hmm, w-what did you come for at this point in time?!
"

"You too, what are you doing at a place like this?"

Kamito asked, seemingly puzzled.

"...I-It's nothing, it isn't like I was searching for you."

"Ahh, I definitely understand that, but—"

"Doesn't that mean you don't understand?!"

Claire agitatedly raised her whip up— Then, she suddenly desisted from doing so.

If she swung her whip here, it'd end up the same as yesterday.

"...W-Well, that's fine."

Claire lowered the whip she raised, and roughly brushed her hair.

Kamito was carrying a blank look.

"Hey, Kamito? Just by chance, I'm casually free this afternoon."

"...? Is that so?"

"That's right. S-So, err, treat me to cake or something at a coffee lounge or somewhere! Th-Then, I'll have... no... choice but to forgive you, you know?"

Her cheeks slightly reddened, and she glanced at Kamito with one eye.

Those words just now were the greatest compromise for this highly-prideful Claire.

It wasn't like she wanted to be treated to cake. For Claire, it was her plan to give him an easy pretext to apologize.

Kamito would say "What, it can't be helped" as he treated her to cake, and Claire would go "Hmm, I'll

forgive you in consideration of this cake" while shrugging her shoulders— Just like that, she thought she could patch up their relationship with a bit-by-bit-like atmosphere.

(It's probably too late, but tentatively, he did come to apologize. I'm also not a kid, so I'll leniently forgive him.)

"Sorry, I have to police Academy Town with Ellis today."

"Oh, I understand. With Ellis...?"

Claire's face froze in a snap.

"H-Hey, Kamito... I didn't hear it well, but... what was that just now?"

"I said, I have Knights work. I am going around and policing the town with Ellis."

Kamito plainly said it once more.

"..."

"Hey, Claire?"

"O-Oh? With Ellis...it's a date, I-Isn't it."

Claire's voice was trembling all over.

"No, it isn't a date, it's Knights—"

"Oh, you've already become the Knights' dog, haven't you? That badge suits you, doesn't it?"

Gogogogogogogogo...!

"...!?"

Claire was angry.

Her red twin-tailed hair bristled up, and she was with an impulse like she was going to release a fireball anytime soon.

"You, just hear me out a little. You don't have to look at the Knights with that much hostility, do you?"

"W-What, don't say it like you understand!"

Claire flared up, and raised her whip.

Gyruruu.

"..."

A somewhat lovely sound was heard.

While Claire held her whip overhead, she awkwardly averted her eyes.

"You, could it be that you haven't had lunch yet?"

"What, isn't that because you didn't make it for me—?"

"The one who chased me out was you."

"That's... true, but..."

Claire glared at Kamito, and groaned.

"Claire, if it's alright with you, would you eat with me?"

"Eh?"

Claire widened her ruby eyes.

"...Th-That's... well..."

Her face reddened, and abruptly turned away.

"I-If you insisted no matter what, I'm fine with that."

"Well then, come. I am eating together with Ellis and the others at the park over there."

"...!?"

Pikuu. Claire's temple twitched.

"Wh-What are you saying, you... Are you an idiot?!"

"I understand that you're on poor relations with the Knights, but they're all normal girls. If you had a meal together with them, wouldn't you become on good terms with them?"

"I have no intentions of being friends with them. I've hated the people from the Knights since a long time ago. I don't care if they're elite or not, but they utterly insulted Nee-sama!"

"Isn't that about the former Knights, Ellis isn't someone like that—"

"...What, Ellis this, Ellis that!"

Claire finally exploded. She was already at the limit of her tolerance.

Releasing her elemental waffe, she tightly grasped her blazing Flame Tongue.

...She didn't understand why.

However, it was unbearably vexing that Kamito was friendly with the Knights and Ellis.

"You are my slave spirit, so you're only mine!"

Her Flame Tongue was swung down as her emotions told.

However.

"—Leave it at that, Claire Rouge."

"...!?"

Her blazing Flame Tongue was held entangled by a lance clad in violent winds.

"It's a violation of school rules for a normal student to be using an elemental waffe in town."

"Ellis!?"

Ellis, who stood like she was protecting Kamito, was glaring at Claire with a relentless look.

"...!"

Claire gnawed down on her molars, seemingly vexed.

Large droplets of tears surfaced on her clear ruby pupils.

"...Enough."

"Eh?"

"That's enough, idiot, do as you please!"

"H-Hey, Claire... Guaa!"

Claire threw the bag of chocolates with all her strength at Kamito's face.

"I despise people like you! Wh-Why don't you just get along with Ellis—"

Claire shouted with a voice mangled with tears and ran away immediately.

Part 5

"—Hey, wasn't that Claire Rouge just now?"

The upperclassmen witnessed Claire's appearance of dashing out from the alley.

They were the adamantine elementalist and the demon mirror elementalist, who fought Claire's team yesterday.

The two of them glared annoyingly at Claire, who was running away.

"...She's alone now. We're also outside of the academy, where it's beyond the eyes of the teachers."

The adamantine elementalist girl exchanged looks, and

"It's useless. Look! That male elementalist and Captain-dono are around."

It was just the moment when Kamito and Ellis emerged, chasing Claire.

"Tch, that male elementalist joined the Knights, didn't he?"

"Isn't it that they're shorthanded because of the assault the other day? Compared to Velsaria's time, the quality of the Sylphid Knights had also fallen greatly."

The two of them were former members of the Knights.

Their confrontational relationship with that audacious Claire Rogue also stemmed from that period.

That said, their conduct lacked integrity to begin with. For example, they persistently misused and abused their authority as Knights to torment weaker students. After Ellis became captain, she had expelled these two from the Knights.

"However, if it's just three underclassmen, we could—"

"You better give it a rest. Even you two would be no match even if you join forces."

"...!?"

The two of them quickly poised themselves at the voice from behind.

The one, who was standing there without even her presence felt by the two elementalists, was—

A jade-green haired, bewitchingly beautiful girl.

"Hey, you two, don't you desire for more splendid power?"

"Wh...at...?"

"Mighty power, to the extent that that hellcat ojou-sama wouldn't be a problem."

Corpse Federation (Murders) merchant, Vivian Melosa's red pupils ominously shone.

Chapter 7 - Valentia Holy Festival

Part 1

It was evening. The plaza of Academy Town was bustling with crowds of people.

Sweet smells tickled his nostrils. At the shrine, delicious-looking baked sweets were piled up like a mountain and princess maidens dispatched from the academy were showcasing a blade dance that entertained the spirits.

"However, where did that girl go?”

As his gaze fell towards the chocolate that Claire had thrown aside—

Kamito breathed a sigh, exasperated.

Together with Ellis and the other two, they had given chase after Claire. But halfway through, the time for the change of patrols came and they had to give up. With that, they started their rounds around the «Wind» area.

"....."

Ellis, walking right beside him with a complicated expression, stared at the chocolate that Kamito was carrying.

"What is it, Ellis?"

"N-No, it's nothing.... It looks like there's no problem in this area."

Ellis coughed, and looked away.

Indeed, there did not seem to be any signs of suspicious activity in this area.

Although there might have been brawls between drunkards and pickpockets, those kinds of troubles were left for the town's vigilante corps to deal with. Rather, what Kamito and the others needed to look out for were the matters that the townspeople, who were not used to interaction with spirits, incurred the anger of the spirits unknowingly.

During the rituals of worshiping the spirits, those kinds of incidents occurred frequently.

"This is almost like.... a da-date."

"Hm, did you say something?"

"Nothing at all, concentrate more on patrolling!"

Ellis' face was flushed a deep red as she got angry.

"So-Sorry...."

Kamito apologized.

(.....Wait a second, isn't Ellis the one who isn't concentrating?)

Since awhile ago Ellis, who was not able to calm down, was stealing glances at Kamito's face from the side now and then.

Somehow, her manner of walking seemed unsteady and uncertain.

Their shoulders coming so close together that he was not sure whether they were touching, and then her screaming "Fuwaa", once again moving away from him — that kind of thing was repeated over and over.

Because of that, they bumped into the people that they passed by, many times.

"Ellis, walking like that is dangerous."

Unable to watch any longer, Kamito grabbed Ellis' hand,

"......W-W-What are you doing, you insolent person!"

"No, since a while ago, you were somewhat unsteady, and it got dangerous... Your hand is also a little hot. Would you happen to have a fever or something?"

"... ~ Wh-Whose fault do you think it is?!"

As Ellis' hand was joined with Kamito's, she hit his shoulder.

"I'll have you bear responsibility for taking my first time!"

"Wh...!?"

At those words of Ellis, whose face was colored in bright red,—

The people, going back and forth on the street, turned around with their faces lighted up.

They glared at Kamito with a scornful-like look and murmured in a soft voice together.

"Ellis, don't utter something that would invite misunderstandings!"

"I-It isn't a misunderstanding! Really, I-it's my first time joining hands with a man!"

"...!?"

That was it— Kamito suddenly understood.

Thinking about it, Ellis was also an ojou-sama with a prestigious noble background.

Now that he thought about it, Claire and the others seemed like they were hesitating about joining hands with him when they were departing yesterday. To them who were the daughters of nobles, joining hands with a boy might be an act more embarrassing than he imagined .

"...Sorry. My bad."

Just as Kamito was about to release her hand—

"Ah, no, I don't mind, and I didn't mean to scare you."

As Ellis embarrassedly looked away, she tightly squeezed his hand back.

It was the soft feeling of a girl's hands. The reason hard calluses were formed here-and-there was surely the proof that she seriously practised her martial arts.

Just like that, Ellis walked on stiffly like a spring-action toy.

"I-It's... a guy's hand"

"Of course, it is."

Upon hearing Kamito's reply, Ellis giggled, seemingly happy, for some reason.

He was instantly startled by that facial expression of the usually dignified Ellis.

"It's more embarrassing than I thought... to hold hands ."

"Ahh, that is true."

Scratching his cheek with one hand, Kamito vaguely nodded.

To be honest, he was a little absent-minded.

From a moment ago, Ellis' large busts were pressing on his arm.

Although, he didn't directly touch them because her Knights breastplate was there, the sensation of their elasticity was being transmitted whether he liked it or not. The reason his eyes unconsciously moved to her willful body beneath her armour was something that couldn't be helped for a boy in puberty.

(W-With such a stiff personality, her body sure is soft...)

With his heart beating hard and full of excitement, the two walked down the main street filled with the hustle-and-bustle of the festival for a while.

The beautiful stone-made street was lit up by the illumination of the spirit crystals.

Pointing at the soft-toy bear ornamented at the display window, Ellis' eyes had sparkled, and she was gazing at a gorgeous party dress in front of a clothing shop.

When Kamito brought up yesterday's maid's outfit incident to tease her, her face turned bright red as she flared up.

"Hmph! After all, I'm not suited for those sort of beautiful clothings!"

"There's no such thing. Ellis in her usual knight clothing is also attractive but I also want to see Ellis wearing clothes like these."

"...What-What are you talking about?"

Pouting her lips, Ellis bashfully looked downwards.

Those actions were not of the usually dignified knight, they seemed to be those of an ordinary girl.

Looking at her like that——

Kamito suddenly had something he wanted to try asking.

"Hey, Ellis, why did you plan on becoming a knight?"

While she was the daughter of the top military families , the Fahrengart family, he had felt that her obsession towards the way of life of a knight wasn't just because of that reason.

"....."

Ellis slowly turned her face toward him.

"At first, it was because of the admiration towards Aneue."

"That Velsaria Eva?"

"That's right. Aneue was a splendid knight. She was a person who was disciplined with herself, hated injustice, was earnestly polishing her sword skills, and was always aiming for a way of life like attaining the objectives of the people."

As if gazing at somewhere far away, she looked up at the sky that was dyed by the faint sunset.

"From when I was a child, I had always been thinking of wanting to be a knight like Aneue. As the successor of

the Fahrengart family, I want to be a spirit knight that protects many people. So, when I joined the academy, I immediately made an application to the Sylphid Knights that Aneue was serving as Captain."

Suddenly, Ellis's reddish-brown pupils darkened.

However— She continued.

"When I joined the academy, Aneue had already changed. As if she was spurred on by something, she had turned into someone merely pursuing power. Of course, I can't say that way of life is absolutely wrong. Pursuing for superior power is also the proper way of life as an elementalist. However, at the very least, that person now isn't the knight I admired."

"What had changed her like that?"

Kamito asked—

Ellis tightly bit her lips,

"It's probably **the match with Ren Ashbell three years ago**."

"...!?"

Without thinking, Kamito had raised his voice.

"I'm also not sure what happened. However, with that match, it is a fact that Aneue had changed."

"..."

Kamito dropped his sight onto his left hand tucked into a leather glove.

The spirit seal, which tied him with his former contracted spirit, was engraved over there.

It was the left hand that defeated Velsaria and won through the Blade Dance three years ago.

It was the left hand that had cut down many «wishes» for the sake of victory.

(—The me three years ago had not been looking at anything.)

He was just merely fighting for her sake.

He had earnestly accumulated victories and brought down many opponents with a pure heart.

There were practically no opponents whose faces he remembered. At that time, he didn't have the leisure of thinking about things like what kind of thoughts the opponents defeated by Ren Ashbell had when participating in the Blade Dance

He recalled Velsaria Eva's icy-like pupils.

(...Was it me who changed Ellis' respected knight?)

Ellis dropped her line of sight from the madder-red sky, and turned towards Kamito.

Her reddish-brown pupils harboured strong will.

"I want to show Aneue it, the way of the knight I believe in. Although I am still inexperienced now, I am thinking of wanting to seize the thing that lies beyond power someday. For that reason, I'm participating in the Blade Dance."

For the sake of the way of the knight I believe in—

Ellis, who said that in a dignified manner, was dazzling to Kamito.

"Ellis, don't you hate Ren Ashbell?"

Kamito had inquired spontaneously.

If the occasion that changed Velsaria was assumed to be the match from three years ago—

It couldn't be helped that she was hated by Ellis— So, he thought.

However, Ellis lightly shook her head.

"Of course, I also had resented her when Aneue was defeated. However, while looking at Ren Ashbell winning and winning, I noticed that I was getting captivated by her."

"I don't get it. She should be similar to the other elementalists, merely dancing a blade dance for the « wish». It's not like she has a splendid goal like Ellis—"

"Wrong"

Ellis interrupted with a harsh voice.

"...?"

"Her blade dance was a blade dance more noble than anyone's. If that was not the case, it would be impossible

for her to satisfy the Elemental Lords, and above all, why do you think the girls, who were watching her at that venue, are now still attracted to her?"

"..."

Kamito spontaneously gulped at the threatening look of Ellis who was like scolding him harshly.

"It was precisely because the appearance of her dancing the blade dance was noble that I was charmed and attracted to her. Surely, she wasn't swinging her sword for herself— but for someone."

"For someone..."

Kamito—

Stared motionlessly at his left hand that exchanged a contract with the darkness spirit girl.

He felt like he was saved a little with Ellis' words.

For someone— That was correct. The reason Kamito participated the Blade Dance was for her.

Losing himself, he swung his sword for the sake of granting her one and only desired «wish».

Even if, for example, that result was something disgusting.

Performing a blade dance for his precious her— at least that was certain.

The girl in front of him had said so.

"Ellis, thank you."

"...? What is this about?"

Ellis frowned suspiciously.

"No, nothing."

Kamito laughed bitterly as he looked away from Ellis.

—Then, his gaze stopped at one store.

"Ellis, could you accompany me to buy a little something?"

"W-We're on duty, you know."

"I have decided on what to buy. It shouldn't take more than a minute."

"...It can't be helped. What are you buying?"

"Um, something..."

As Kamito scratched the back of his ear, he walked towards the store.

Part 2

Claire was walking through the Spirit Forest on the outskirts with a dejected expression.

The lively noise from the plaza far away could be heard.

The day was almost over, but it was somewhat vexing for her to return just like that and she also felt that she didn't want to meet Fianna and Rinslet.

"...Euph! What's with the work of the Knights? D-Despite that I was planning to forgive him."

Claire rubbed her eyes briskly with her uniform sleeves.

The cold evening wind blew her red twin-tailed hair like it was making fun of her.

Claire bit her lips tightly and dropped her sight onto her leather loafers.

Potaa[7] A drop of tear spilled over and fell.

"...It's my birthday and yet..."

Upon voicing it out, she suddenly became unbearably lonely.

Every year, both her parents, her sister and the locals would gather in great numbers in their castle and a grand birthday party would be held. She would wear a beautiful dress, the table would be fully lined up with her favourite cakes and feasts, and she would be sleeping in a warm bed together with her sister, who would return from the «Divine Ritual Institute» only on that day — that would be the most enjoyable day of the year.

However, four years ago— on that day when her sister Rubia Elstein betrayed the Elemental Lord of Fire.

Young Claire lost everything.

(...That's right, I still have my goals.)

Shaking off her sentiments, Claire sharply raised her face from the ground.

It was not the time to be having fun with such things like her birthday or the Valentia Holy Festival.

(My goals are to win through the Blade Dance and know the truth of four years ago. For that objective, I have to become even stronger—)

Her red twin-tailed hair bristled up like flames.

(Even if someone like Kamito isn't there, I'll—)

"Fufu, you seem to be harbouring a lot of stress, hellcat ojou-sama."

"...!?"

Towards the voice from behind—

Claire quickly turned around.

A girl was giggling as she was standing at the opposite of the grove of trees.

She had jade-green hair that grew till her waist and ears with sharp tips.

She had recollections of her.

She was the waitress, who came carrying the gigantic parfait, at the restaurant yesterday.

(When did she get close?!)

Claire got cautious and readied herself. To approach Claire, an elementalist, without being noticed, she couldn't be a normal person.

Her intuition was telling her that this lady was dangerous.

"Who... are you? I am sorry but I am now in a terribly bad mood."

"Ah, what a cute face you're making, what a very scary cat."

Vivian Melosa swung both her hands to show her.

"Despite that I took great pains on planning to lend you power.”

"...Power?"

Claire's eyebrows twitched.

"Yes, it's the thing that you now desire the most."

"You... could you be...?"

Clare glared at the lady before her.

"The Cursed Armament Seal smuggler!"

"Correct! However, to be more accurate, it would be researcher, you know♪"

As Vivian Melosa was swinging her index finger, she was slowly walking towards her.

Her red glaringly shiny pupils were peering motionlessly into Claire's eyes.

It was like she saw through till the innermost depths of her heart.

"—Hmm, kitty, don't you want that splendid power?"

Her words roaringly reverberated.

Claire couldn't move like her feet were binded.

(This is domination magic?!)

It was a type of mind manipulation magic.

Her words echoed many times in her head and penetrated the innermost part of her mind.

"... You"

"If you implanted my «Cursed Armament Seal», your hellcat-chan will become an even mightier spirit."

It hurt like her head was splitting. Even if she plugged her ears with both hands, the words penetrated through.

—Hey, don't you want power?

—The power to overwhelm everything— The power to achieve your «wish».

(...It's obvious that I want something like that!)

She had wanted power. She had needed power at any cost for the sake of her goals.

For that reason, she would do anything— She had prepared herself like that since that day four years ago.

Thus, she had even risked the danger to her life to reach her hand out to a powerful sealed spirit.

She had made a contract with that darkness spirit's presented frenzy spirit.

However.

"Don't look down on me!"

In an instant, Claire's blazing Flame Tongue manifested in her hand, and mowed down the space before her.

"...My domination magic was broken?"

"My apologies but I'll reject your forceful sale."

As Claire raised her breathing, she swung her Flame Tongue with a snap as if to shake off the temptation.

"How disappointing. I thought you had the qualifications but it looks like I miscalculated."

Vivian Melosa shrugged her shoulders looking bored.

If it was Claire from a few weeks ago, she probably wouldn't have been able to oppose the temptation.

She might have sought for easy power and laid her hands on the Cursed Armament Seal.

(But I'm now different.)

If you want power— I will become your contract spirit.

(...After all, he had promised me)

"So, I don't need such phony powers!"

At the same time Claire shouted, she released a fireball of spirit magic.

She didn't go easy on the merchant opponent of the Cursed Armament Seal. She attacked with the intention of turning her completely into cinders.

A terrifying shock and explosion resounded in the quiet forest.

The trees in the surroundings were blown off at one go and had fallen down in a straight line.

The trees burned up. However, Vivian Melosa wasn't there.

"Fufu, please don't be in such a hurry. There is someone else who wants to meet you without fail."

A bewitching voice sounded from within the forest.

Claire was startled and turned around—

From deep within the forest, a tall girl appeared.

"You are..."

She was the adamantine elementalist upperclassman, who provoked Claire yesterday.

There was completely no expression on that face of hers.

She came over, walking unsteadily like a ghost.

"Don't tell me... the Cursed Armament Seal?"

"Ah, please don't be mistaken. The one who wanted power was her. Although, it looks like her mind couldn't bear my Cursed Armament Seal."

The sound of chuckling scorns reverberated within the forest.

"...Wa...a...laire...Rouge...Aaaahhh!"

The adamantine elementalist girl released a ear-splitting wail.

In that instant, a violent wind swept over, and a huge beast appeared from nowhere.

Over there— There was large deer of the metal attribute, which easily surpassed Claire's height.

It had two horns that extended out radically and black pupils that harboured signs of atrocity.

It had a terrifying air of intimidation that caused her skin to tremble.

"What? Isn't this... the adamantine spirit!?"

Claire raised her voice in shock.

Her contracted spirit shouldn't be a powerful high-ranking spirit of this level.

"No, that is without doubt her spirit. It evolved with my Cursed Armament Seal, you know♪"

Vivian Melosa chuckled.

"So, would you please cooperate with my experiment, hellcat ojou-sama."

"...!?"

The frenzied large deer released a repulsive roar and came charging over.

Part 3

What Kamito bought was the cat pendant that Claire was looking at.

After getting the box wrapped with a red ribbon, Kamito placed it into his chest pocket as he embarrassedly scratched his face.

"Today is her birthday."

"I see. The reason you asked for the remuneration in advance was for the sake of buying that."

"Hn, you could say that... but, I ended up having a quarrel with her."

The moment Kamito shrugged his shoulders, Ellis coughed.

"I think reconciling is not going to be that hard. Wasn't that chocolate from just now Claire Rouge's handmade item?"

"Ah, it looks like it. It also looks like she practised yesterday."

"For her to give that on the day of the Valentia Holy Festival means that, err, she doesn't even hate you, I think... I mean, I think that she wants to reconcile, right?"

"If it was like that, it would be great."

"A-Although, in the case where the recipient is of the opposite sex, there is also a slight chance that that's not just it but..."

Ellis coughed again—

She stared at Kamito's face.

"Hn? What's the matter?"

"E-Err, u-um... Actually, I-I also have chocolates—"

Ellis was almost going to take out something from the pocket of her uniform, and at that moment.

Dooooon—!

An earth-shaking-like thunderous roar reverberated from the direction of the plaza.

"...Ellis!?"

"Ah, lets go Kamito!"

Ellis instantly changed back to her knight face, and started running vigorously.

Part 4

Pushing their way through the chaotic crowds and arriving at the plaza—

"What is that!?"

A gigantic beast had been rampaging about in the middle of the plaza.

It was a beast like a wild boar, with two sharp tusks.

Its whole body was covered by a shell that was like thoroughly polished mirror.

That was not a beast. That was a spirit.

Furthermore, it was a frenzied high level spirit.

The crowd in the plaza had already fallen into panic.

In trying to escape simultaneously in the same direction, they ended up falling one after another all over the place.

There also seemed to be a great number of old people and young children amongst the crowd.

"Did someone make the spirit run wild?"

"Ah, there might be an elementalist somewhere but that thing has completely lost control."

As expected of being used to these sort of situations, Ellis was very calm.

She had already armed her elemental waffe «Ray Hawk» in her hand.

"The investigation of the cause will be done later. I've concluded this situation to be a level five spirit disaster. Let's exterminate it, Kamito."

"Understood!"

Giving a nod, Kamito unsheathed Terminus Est from the sword belt on his hip.

Driving divine power to the sword, he woke up the Demon Slayer sleeping Demon King Killing Sacred Sword.

"Est, lend me your power!"

Responding to the presence of the elemental waffen, the frenzied spirit turned towards the two.

Releasing an atmosphere-shaking giant roar, it kicked the ground and charged forward.

There was a terrifying tremor. The buildings around collapsed one by one.

"—Ha!"

Ellis swung Ray Hawk horizontally.

Countless wind blades that could even rip steel apart were produced and were released simultaneously towards the spirit.

Even if a high level spirit took on that directly, it would not get away fine.

But—

At that moment, the shell of the mirror-like spirit glowed with rainbow colors.

"What!?"

Beams of light burst forth— And at the same time, the blades of wind that should have hit it directly were all reflected at once.

The wind blades that were bounced back slashed the surrounding buildings right in half. The upper half of the buildings slowly fell down, and raised up a thunderous roar and a large dancing cloud of sand.

"My wind blades were repelled!?"

"No— It amplified and reflected them."

Kamito sharply glared at the spirit in front of him.

(...A spirit that reflects attribute attacks, eh?)

What came to Kamito's mind was the match yesterday.

(...Don't tell me, that's the mirror spirit?)

"It's coming, Kamito!"

Ellis shouted out. After blasting off the scattered rubble, the frenzied spirit started charging.

Kamito took a stance with Terminus Est and stood in the way of the spirit.

It would be easy to dodge— But, that couldn't be done.

There was a great crowd, who was late in getting away , behind him. He had to protect them at that point.

Its huge tusks were approaching. That intense blow— was stopped by Kamito using the edge of his sword.

A metallic sound resounded. He could barely stop the large beast but Terminus Est, who could only bring forth less than a tenth of her power, couldn't even chip its skin.

(...This thing's divine power is in a different league.)

Cold sweat surfaced on Kamito's forehead.

As Kamito held back the giant tusks with the sword, he was gradually getting pinned down.

(Damn, if we're in Astral Zero, I'll be able to manage somehow but—)

It was a frenzied high level spirit. It might be a threat to ordinary elementalists, but for Kamito who was titled the Strongest Blade Dancer, it was not an opponent that would give him a hard fight.

However, the problem was the fact that the crowd, whom were late in getting away, was there in his surroundings.

What would happen if he released this beast onto them would be plainly obvious.

Discerning that attribute attacks were ineffective, Ellis landed behind Kamito and went on guiding people to take refuge. It was a Sylphid Knights Captain-like calm and reasonable decision.

The demon mirror spirit started to howl wildly.

It smashed the ground with that shock and sent Kamito, who was holding back the tusks, flying.

And like that, he plunged into a mountain of rubble.

"Gah, what crazy strength..."

Groaning, Kamito tried to stand up as he was wavering, and—

"—Kamito!"

Hearing Ellis' shout, Kamito quickly turned his head around.

The demonic mirror spirit was stampeding its feet violent on the ground.

In its path, there was a small girl who was petrified.

It was probably the first time she had seen a rampaging spirit, so it seemed that she got scared and her feet wouldn't move.

The spirit released a loud roar and charged.

(Damn, I can't make it!)

Upon standing up, Kamito kicked the ground and leaped.

With that timing, grabbing the girl and dodging was impossible.

Making a quick judgement, he pushed the girl to the side.

A spray of red blood danced out.

The strong attack gouged the side of Kamito's abdomen.

"Gwah!"

It was hot. His vision turned pure white at that burning-like pain.

The demonic mirror spirit swung its tusks and Kamito's body was slammed onto the ground.

"...! Kamito!!"

Ellis instantly dashed towards him.

The white school uniform was slowly dyed with the color of blood.

(... What about that girl?)

Enduring the pain, he encircled his surroundings with his line of sight—

The girl he thrust aside was unable to stand up and was sitting on the ground.

The moment he took a breath of relief, he coughed violently.

Red blood surged out onto the ground.

"Kamito! Are you alright?! Kamito—!!"

Ellis cried out loud.

"Ah... Somehow."

Like he sustained a concussion, his consciousness was slipping away.

The face of Ellis worriedly looking at him became blurry,

Cold sweat gushed out from his whole body. He knew that he was turning pale.

Pressing the side of his abdomen with one hand, Kamito slowly stood up.

He glared at the demonic mirror spirit that was covered in his own blood.

"E-Ellis, cover me. I'll take care of that guy."

"But, your injury—"

"The affinity between your elemental waffe and this guy is too incompatible. Only I can do this."

Presented with an irrefutable truth, Ellis vexingly bit her lips

Kamito clenched Terminus Est with both hands, and put in all the divine power he had.

(...I have to finish it at the next strike...)

Demon Slayer

The Demon King Killing Sacred Sword was the strongest class of elemental waffe, but its output was very unstable.

Without driving enough divine power into it and controlling it, most of its power couldn't be manifested.

With the Kamito's current state, he could only bet on that one strike.

The demonic mirror spirit raised its tusk, and charged again.

"Ellis, I'm counting on you!"

"Ah!"

Kamito jumped— no, flew just above it.

Ellis had used her wind spirit magic.

Flying over the demonic mirror spirit, Kamito swung his sword downwards on the huge beast's head.

However.

(...! It didn't go through!?)

The Demon King Killing Sacred Sword only slightly pierced the demonic spirit's forehead.

Because of his serious injury, his control over Est was unstable.

The raging demonic mirror spirit shook his head violently and threw Kamito on the ground.

The behemoth slowly approached the fallen Kamito from just above his head—

At that moment, a deep crimson slash ripped the skies apart.

Flame Tongue was twined around the demonic mirror spirit, making it trip and that behemoth toppled sideways .

Dooon!

There was terrifying tremor. Dust instantly flew up.

"What!?"

From the shroud of dust— her voice could be heard.

"That person is my slave spirit... don't touch him without my permission!"

"Claire!?"

Kamito's eyes widened in surprise.

Holding Flame Tongue, Claire got down from the second floor of a building.

"Y-You, why—"

"We'll talk afterwards. Let's defeat them first."

"Them?"

Kamito suspiciously frowned— and followed after what was before Claire's glaring line of sight.

Then, buildings were destroyed and, from the opposite side of the plaza, another spirit appeared.

It was a large deer of metal with huge horns hung high on its head.

"...! There's another one?!"

"What on earth is happening, Claire Rouge?"

Ellis rushed over and asked with a sharp expression.

"Their masters are the demonic mirror elementalist and the adamantine elementalist students. I've already defeated the elementalists, but these two spirits have completely lost control and gone into a frenzy."

"Don't tell me, it's the two people from yesterday... B-But their contract spirits don't have that kind of form—"

Stopping his sentence midway— Kamito suddenly realized. Ellis also seemed to get it.

"Don't tell me..."

"Uh, they made use of the Cursed Armament Seals."

"...!"

Ellis bit her lips vexingly.

She was lamenting about the fact that she couldn't stop the students from reaching out to the Cursed Armament Seals.

Cursed Armament Seal allowed mid level spirits to evolve into a high level spirit. There's no way they'll be

all right transplanting such things. The result was the rampaging of their spirits.

"By the way, what's with those injures of yours!?"

Noticing the blood stains on his uniform, Claire widened her eyes.

"...Ah, I made a blunder. You too, aren't you also covered in injuries?"

"...S-Such a thing is not a big deal."

Claire quickly turned her face away, holding up a strong front.

But, even her uniform was torn everywhere, and her limbs were full of injuries.

"Putting that aside, Ellis, where's the Sylphid Knights reinforcements?"

"They should already be on their way. However, it's just that the ones policing this area were Kamito and I... amongst this crowd, it will take time for them to come from the other areas."

Ellis bit her lips and looked down. As the battle strength of the Sylphid Knights were almost cut by half, they couldn't help but disperse their security forces.

Releasing a loud roar that shook the earth, the fallen demonic mirror spirit got up.

The adamantine spirit with the form of a large deer was also slowly walking to the center of the plaza.

"There are two high level spirits running wild, —As expected, this is really intense."

Claire nervously groaned.

There were still large groups of people, who failed to escaped outside the plaza. Waiting leisurely for the reinforcement from the Sylphid Knights and the Academy would only end up in irreparable results.

"I could probably at least stall for time?"

"Apologies, Claire Rouge, lend me your strength until reinforcements arrive."

Respectively clenching their own elemental waffen, Claire and Ellis confronted the two spirits.

And at that instant, a bright flash exploded.

There was a ear-splitting thunderous sound. The rubble was smashed up.

"...! What was that!?"

As Kamito protected his eyes from the flying stone fragments, he yelled out.

That was rain.

That was a rain of bombardment that mercilessly fired at the two spirits.

The ground violently shook, and countless pillars of fire shot up to the sky.

"..."

The moment the bombardment stopped—

There was only the completely destroyed plaza left behind.

The two high level spirits were completely annihilated.

(...What on earth happened!?)

While coughing violently, Kamito looked high up— at the direction of the bombardment.

Over there— a giant fortress was floating!

It was an aerial fortress that was equipped with several layers of composite armor and a countless amount of cannons.

A pair of frozen ice-blue pupils were glaring onto the ground.

"The Silent Fortress—"

The Academy's strongest elementalist, who destroyed the plaza in an instant, slowly landed on the ground.

"Strength will be trampled by greater strength. Half-baked strengths are the same as nothing."

"Velsaria..."

Kamito pressed down on the side his abdomen that was oozing blood as he glared at Velsaria.

There were buildings of the plaza that were destroyed in every way possible by the bombardment.

The fragments of rubble, which was smashed up, were merciless raining onto the crowd that had not fled.

"Why did you open fire! You should know that using such an elemental waffe would end out like—"

"I only exterminated the rampaging spirits. Those that were involved were unlucky— no, for it to end with this level of damage was instead lucky of them."

"Aneue! Do you seriously think like—"

Velsaria coldly looked down at the enraged Ellis.

"Ellis, it looks like it was a mistake to entrust you as the captain. It seems like you can't even deal with a situation of this level. You're free to spit out your ideals of a knight or something— but ideals without power are just thoughtless words. You don't have the qualifications to call yourself a knight."

"...!?"

Pushing away Ellis, Velsaria was about to leave.

At that moment.

"Take it back."

"What?"

"Take it back, those words you just said! And apologize to Ellis!"

With his faint consciousness, Kamito dragged his feet forward with wobbly footsteps and approached Velsaria.

It was unacceptable that she spouted out such words without even knowing Ellis' feelings.

It was the fact that the one who spouted such words was the knight that Ellis had once admired.

"Whatever belief you hold onto is your freedom. However, you know, I'll just never forgive you who doesn't know anything, for stepping on Ellis' ideals."

"I'm just saying the truth. The Fahrengart knights would never twist their words."

"Don't mess around, you do not have the qualifications to call yourself a knight."

"...!?"

There were ripples of emotions rising in Velsaria's pupils.

It was neither irritation, nor anger— but some different emotion.

"Disappear, male elementalist. Your existence is an eyesore."

"Wait—"

Just when he was going to try chase her further, Kamito's vision violently shook.

Blood gushed out of his throat. The vision in front of his eyes suddenly began to fade like there was a haze.

"Damn...!"

"—Kamito!"

Claire quickly held and stopped Kamito's body that was falling to the ground.

Chapter 8: Ellis' Determination

Part 1

"Ah..."

As Kamito opened his eyes, the familiar ceiling of Claire's room came into his vision.

Warm sunlight was shining through the curtain.

(...Eh? I... Why was I sleeping?)

His memory was in a mess.

He didn't know when his pajamas were put on him, or when his bandages were wrapped on him.

Next to his bed, there was a cracked spirit crystal that he believed was used for healing.

Kamito was going to just stand up for now—

"Hoo... Ah...!"

Burning like pain ran at the side of his abdomen.

When he took a look, the blood at the bandages wrapped around his abdomen had dried up and hardened.

(That's right, I—)

Due to that pain, Kamito finally remembered.

(I was pierced at my abdomen by that spirit...)

It was the demonic mirror spirit that went out of control due to the power of the Cursed Armament Seal.

The spirit that wounded Kamito was annihilated by Velsaria.

With overwhelming destructive force. Without even leaving any traces.

A spirit, which was thoroughly destroyed to that extent, could not even return back to Astral Zero.

It should have been completely eradicated.

"The Academy's strongest blade dancer— huh?"

Precisely because it was a sealed spirit the same as Est, that fortress was an abnormal elemental waffe.

She was becoming far stronger than the time at the Blade Dance three years ago.

(...With how I am now, could I defeat her?)

As he clenched his left hand which had once been holding a jet-black demonic sword, he asked himself.

He had a blank of three years where he went embarking on the journey to find Restia.

There was also the fact that the spirit contract with Est was still incomplete.

If it was about the reasons that he couldn't win, he could come up with as many as he liked.

(That orphan of the «Instructional School» — Jio Inzagi had said that I've become weak...)

That was because Kamito was subconsciously protecting his companions.

If that was a weakness, then—

(... I have indeed become weak, heh.)

Enduring the pain like that of a terrible burn wound, he finally got up from the bed.

Kamito's uniform was hanging on a wall of the room. It was a mere shadow of its former self with all that damage.

It was probably decided that there would be no point in washing it now, so it was left there like that.

While he placed both hands on the wall, he started walking with shaky footsteps.

After he searched his uniform's chest pocket, he took out a present and a chocolate.

The chocolate had melted and been flattened, but it was something that Claire made with great trouble. So, he was going to eat it gratefully.

After making his resolve and tossing a bite-size piece into his mouth, sweetness instantly spread out inside his mouth.

"...Hn? This is surprisingly..."

Although there was still a bit of bitterness, it was properly made deliciously.

Compared to the coal she had been mass-producing, she had improved considerably.

(...She basically is a very hard working person, isn't she?)

Her eccentrics that went with her mood was her weakness, but as she was an honour student, she was fast at apprehending things.

If she was serious, her cooking should also certainly conspicuously improve.

"—Kamito!?"

Suddenly, the room's door opened.

The one who came in, was Claire holding crumpled bandages with both hands.

"Y-You, what are you doing!"

"Nm? The chocolate you gave me was made pretty well. You've worked hard."

"Eh?"

Kamito frankly praised—

Claire's face immediately reddened.

"I-Isn't that obvious? I-I've practised a lot after all... Eh, that's not the point. W-Why are you awake? Your body still isn't in a condition to walk, right?!"

"Ah, no, just walking isn't a problem, look... Ouch!"

Just by slightly moving his arm, pain ran through the side of his abdomen.

"...Haaa. You really are a fool, your wound opened again, didn't it? Come on, sit there. I'll put new bandages on you."

"Ahhh, sorry..."

Being softly pressed on his shoulders by Claire, Kamito was made to sit on the bed.

Under the gentle treatment from Claire that was different from usual, Kamito's heart ended up beating quickly.

"...Geez, you're a fool."

While Claire wrapped the bandages unskillfully—

She told Kamito what happened after he fainted.

The two, who reached out to the Cursed Armament Seals, were found unconscious in the forest.

It seemed like they were arrested immediately after the arrival of the Knights and were moved to the capital. Laying their hands on the Cursed Armament Seals did not mean that it ended with just breaking the academy rules. They would end up being charged for their crimes by the council that judged elementalists.

The actions by Velsaria, who got the general public involved, did not cause any deaths, and in addition, as a result of suppressing the casualties in the town to the minimum, she seemed to have ended up not being charged.

The one who issued the ruling was Greyworth, however— this judgement was probably pushed back to just before the Blade Dance and it —without a doubt— involved the speculation of the congress of the Ordesia Empire that there was no way they could punish the academy's strongest candidate.

After Ellis helped Claire move Kamito, she seemed to have stayed confined in her room.

It might be that she felt responsible as the Captain for the fact that she couldn't protect the town from destruction and that she couldn't prevent students from getting involved with the Cursed Armament Seals.

"... How long did I sleep?"

"For almost a day. The Valentia Holy Festival ended a long time ago."

"Is that so..."

Kamito glanced at the clock hanging on the wall.

Since last night, more than half a day had already passed.

"Claire, I'm sorry for being late."

Kamito handed over the small box, which he took out of his uniform a while ago, to Claire.

"What?"

"Ah... Err, this is your present... For your birthday. Although it's already over."

"...!?"

Claire widely opened her ruby eyes.

"No way, why...?"

"Rinslet told me. Well, for an ojou-sama of a noble, this may not be something of high value."

"..."

Receiving the box, Claire untied the ribbon with fidgety hands.

Inside the box, a cat-shaped silver pendant was perfectly placed.

"T-This, isn't this what I wanted...?"

"Weren't you continuously looking at it that time?"

"U-Uh, but..."

Claire gently and preciously took out the pendant.

"This should be expensive. You aren't even a noble, how did—"

"I asked a big favour from Ellis, and got an advance on the remuneration from the Knights."

"...S-So... It was like that."

Claire tightly clasped the pendant, while she looked at Kamito with her eyes glancing upwards—

"...Th-Thank you, Kamito"

And said that shyly.

Kamito's heart spontaneously beat faster at her expression that she usually didn't even show.

(...T-This person, making such a face is criminally cute —)

He had been thinking that he would hear something like—"You're sensible for a slave at best".

He did not think she would express her gratitude that frankly.

"Sorry, Kamito... Err, I was at fault."

"Mn?"

With another unbelievable line emerging, Kamito doubted his ears.

"I-I'm saying that I was at fault... Err, for getting angry and chasing you out. You joined the Knights for the sake of earning money to gift me this?"

"Ah, no, that's—"

Just when he was about to say it, Kamito closed his mouth.

Although it wasn't entirely like that— it seemed better to remain silent at this point.

"Despite that I didn't even listen to your explanation and willfully got angry... Sorry."

Her red twin tails drooped down.

"No, I'm at fault, my words were insufficient at that time. Sorry."

"Kamito..."

"—Hey, are you people done?"

There was the sound of a cough.

"...!?"

The two turned away in a fluster.

"Fianna, since when were you here!?"

"From when Kamito-kun pressed on coercively, saying 'It's time for you to become more frank, even though you always say you hate it— the truth is you want to be messed up by me, right?'"

"Don't fabricate an impossible fact!"

"Y-Yeah! T-To be messed up... T-That's not allowed!"

Claire turned steamily bright-red and got angry.

"Hoho, I'm joking. Really Claire, what are you getting red for, I wonder?"

"W-Wh-What did you come here for, Ero-Queen?!"

"As our opponent for the match tomorrow has already been declared, I came here to tell you that!"

"Our opponent for the match?"

"Yeah, our opponent is the first-ranking —Velsaria Eva's— team~"

"...!"

Claire's expression became sharp.

"...The Silent Fortress', huh?"

As long as they kept on winning through, she was an opponent they would have to face one day.

Claire should have been prepared for this.

However, the power that eradicated two mighty high level spirits in an instant was—

"—No problem."

Kamito picked up the elemental waffe sword that was leaned on the side of the bed.

"I will defeat Velsaria. I have to make her open her eyes with my hands."

"W-What are you saying!"

Claire sharply glared at Kamito.

"With that kind of injury, there's no way you can participate in the match tomorrow?"

"She isn't an opponent you two can win against."

"T-Things will work out. Putting Velsaria herself aside, the others have not yet matured as a team. As they were just head-hunted from the Knights, their training in coordination have also not yet been sufficiently—"

"That Silent Fortress isn't such an easy opponent."

"That's..."

Claire had a impulsive personality, however, as an elementalist, she was endowed with calm eyes for battles .

Just with that, she wouldn't mistake the strength difference between Velsaria and her.

The strength of Claire, who uses Scarlet, towered above the rest of the elementary students but, even with that, she wasn't an opponent she could win against.

Former princess maiden of the «Divine Ritual Institute » Fianna was an expert at ritual dances but it did not change the fact that she's a novice at battles. Her

Georgios was certainly strong but considering the fact that it could not be released as an elemental waffe, its options for battles were limited at any rate.

Besides, in order to attack the floating fortress, a spirit that could make powerful long-range attacks was necessary.

The thing that would be dealing with the anti-air battle in Team Scarlet would currently be only Claire's spirit magic. However, it would be impossible for ordinary spirit magic to break that armor.

"But, if I were to be an attacker, we could somehow hold for five minutes—"

Onto Kamito who was about to get out of bed—

Mugyuu

"Yeah yeah, no matter how sturdy Kamito-kun's body is, participating in tomorrow's match is absolutely a no-go."

Fianna pressed the cleavage of her soft breasts.

Claire angrily glared at Kamito, whose face turned red from the comfortable feeling of elasticity.

"That's right, an injured person like you would just become a burden."

"..."

It was vexing but he couldn't make a rebuttal.

Indeed, even if Kamito, who was seriously injured, participated, he would just end up being a hindrance.

"Then... is Team Scarlet forfeiting?"

"That's—"

Kamito, who asked, understood it. That option was not possible.

Once one forfeited a match, one's ranking would significantly drop as a penalty.

Even without that, if they don't defeat the first ranking team here, the possibility of sixth-ranking Team Scarlet to enter the top participating three within the next two weeks would almost disappear.

"..."

A heavy atmosphere filled the room, and at that moment—

"Fuu, I hear what you're saying!"

An elegant voice came from outside the room.

The one coming in with her platinum-blonde hair swaying was Rinslet.

Carol the maid was courteously standing behind her..

"Rinslet, what are you doing entering my room as you please!?"

"Everyone, it seems like my power is needed."

Ignoring Claire who complained, Rinslet boldly walked.

She stopped in front of Kamito, who was sitting on the bed, and brushed up her hair.

"As long as it is me, I'll see that the fortress lady falls to the ground."

"Milady is saying that she wishes to join Claire-sama's team."

Carol simultaneously translated what Rinslet's words meant.

"Is that right, Rinslet?"

"...N-No! I just..."

Rinslet asked for Carol's help in a fluster.

"Fufu, milady, you're really not honest."

Placing her hands near her mouth, Carol giggled.

"—Rinslet!"

Suddenly, Kamito stood up and grasped her shoulders .

Her slender shoulders started trembling.

"Hyan! W-what are you doing! Grabbing a lady's shoulders so violently!"

She protested with a shrilling voice. However, Kamito did not let go.

"..."

"Ah, wha..."

With Kamito staring at her, Rinslet quickly quieted down.

Her face turned bright red as she pinched the edge of her skirt..

"S-Stop...Err If you look at me in such a way, I-I'll end up feeling strange."

"K-Kamito, what are you doing!?"

"Kamito-kun, no matter the circumstances, you're overly lacking in distinction."

Ignoring Claire and Fianna, who raised their voices—

"Please, Rinslet. Join our team."

"Eh?"

Rinslet was astonished. Claire also was staring in wonder.

Rinslet's elemental waffe «Freezing Arrow» was a long range attack elemental waffe. Especially as Kamito would be unable to enter tomorrow's match, they would want to include her into the team by all means.

Although, as Claire would belligerently ask, this ojou-sama would certainly put on her pride. So, that's why Kamito made a begging appearance.

Rinslet—

"A-Alright..."

Like a bride that was proposed to, she docilely nodded .

"I-If Kamito-san says so..."

Blushing, she twirled the tips of her hair with her fingertip.

"Isn't this fine, Claire?"

Kamito gently let his hands go from Rinslet's shoulders and turned around.

Claire sighed, saying "It can't be helped".

"Certainly, if we cared about its appearance, we can't win against that «Silent Fortress». At any rate, we would need ranged support, and its strength is so-so."

"W-Wait, please don't misunderstand. I offered to join your team because Kamito-san requested it."

Carol pacified Rinslet, who flew into a rage.

In any case, this meant that they now ended up being able to make long distance attacks from the ground.

(...If I add myself in as an attacker, our balance would become good.)

Claire seemed to have thought of the same thing as Kamito.

"All we're left with is one more person, we'll need someone with the power of an attacker though..."

She mumbled with a serious look.

Just then, there was the sound of knocking from the door.

"...?"

Everyone looked at each other... Having visitors come to this room was unusual.

Claire walked over and opened the door.

The ones outside the door— were two unexpected people.

"Y-You two!?"

While Claire held onto the door knob, she widened her eyes.

"Claire Rouge, we have a request for you..."

"...Although we know that something like this isn't the courtesy of making a request."

They were Ellis' teammates who should be recuperating at the academy's medical institution.

They were Rakka and Reishia from the Sylphid Knights.

Part 2

In a dark room with all its curtains closed—

Ellis was cowering in her bed with a face that lacked aspiration.

What she was absent-mindedly staring at was a spirit crystal sealed with memories.

There was the figure of Velsaria that Ellis idealized when she was young.

She also didn't go for the Knights meeting this morning. This was, of course, her first time.

What she was wearing wasn't the academy uniform, but pajamas with polka-dots.

Without even tying her ponytail, her long hair spread out radially on her bed..

(—You are not a knight.)

Velsaria's words were revived in her head.

(It may be just as what Aneue said...)

Amidst the darkness, Ellis had firmly grasped her bed sheet.

(...While I've said that that's not it, in the end, I couldn't protect anything.)

The townsfolk who were enjoying the festival.

The students that ended up involved with the Cursed Armament Seal.

In addition— even her precious comrades from the Knights.

Even Kamito, who came to assist the Knights out of good will, had sustained serious injuries.

(It's all my responsibility. If I had gotten more of my act together, this would—)

It was also natural that the upperclassmen responded to Velsaria's invitation and left the Knights.

There would be no one who would follow a powerless captain only speaking of ideals.

"...I...am not qualified to call myself a knight—"

"That's right, in your current state, you are not qualified to be called a knight, Ellis."

"...!"

Ellis threw up her blanket in shock.

"Claire Rouge?"

"Sorry, but I melted your keyhole."

As Claire said that, she was entering the room without any discretion.

"W-Why are you here, and what do you mean that I don't have the qualifications of a knight!?"

"Heh~ You still have the spirit to get angry after an insult. I feel at ease now."

As Claire walked to the side of the bed, she placed her hands on her hips and looked down at Ellis.

Normally, Ellis would have gallantly stared back, but —

Now, she averted her eyes like she was being overwhelmed.

"...H-Has Kamito awakened yet?"

"Yeah, he even said some reckless things like participating in tomorrow's match."

"What—? Don't tell me, with that kind of injury?"

"That's right. Furthermore, our opponent is the Academy's strongest «Silent Fortress»."

"That's crazy, what are you all thinking!?"

Ellis stood up to grab Claire.

"Do you still not understand Aneue's strength?"

"Ah, she is certainly a powerful elementalist— but it doesn't mean she's invincible."

"What?"

Ellis frowned.

Velsaria Eva Fahrengart was the strongest in the Academy.

This was a fact everyone knew of.

"Three years ago, Ren Ashbell defeated her."

"That's— She is the strongest blade dancer. That comparison is just too different."

"True. But, we have the goal of defeating that Ren Ashbell."

"Wha—?"

Towards those words that Ellis had never imagined of — she was at a loss for words.

(...Defeat Ren Ashbell!?)

"How is that possible—?"

"It is possible. I mean I'll do it~"

"..."

Claire's eyes were serious.

She was seriously thinking of defeating the strongest blade dancer.

"I will win through the Blade Dance. Then, I will definitely get my «wish» granted. Whether if it is the Silent Fortress or the strongest blade dancer, anyone who gets in my way shall just be brought down."

Glaring straight ahead were her pupils harbouring calm flames.

Small anxieties were inside Ellis' heart.

"I-I..."

"Ellis, did you plan on entering the Blade Dance with such resolution?"

Claire seized Ellis' collar.

"Is your ideal of a knight that you're aiming to be something of this level?"

"—No!"

Ellis got startled and pushed Claire's hands away.

"I am... I am a prided knight of the Fahrengart!"

Boom!

Violent winds blew about in the room.

The bed sheet was blown away, and the small items on the desk and furnishings were dancing in mid-air.

The curtains were ripped apart, and bright light suddenly shone into the dark room.

"..."

After the storm eased down—

"It looks like your winds are still blowing."

Claire suddenly smiled.

Then, she thrust her finger towards Ellis.

With her other hand on her hips—

"Ellis, join our team!"

"...W-What?"

Ellis was dumbfound and asked back.

"Me... Team Scarlet?"

"Correct. If you join, we can win— against that Silent Fortress."

Claire nodded with a serious expression.

However, Ellis firmly shook her head.

"Sorry, that's an unreasonable talk. I already have companions to fight with—"

"—Captain!"

"?"

Ellis turned around towards the voice she had heard from outside the room.—

"Y-You two!?"

The ones over there were a lively-looking girl with short hair and a similar-looking girl with braided hair.

They were her teammates Rakka and Reishia.

"...You slipped out from the medical centre?"

They should be having complete rest.

They shouldn't be allowed to be out at such a place.

"Why...?"

"We are, erm, hoping that Captain would partake in the Blade Dance."

Rekka said while painfully coughing.

Reishia nodded.

"We decided it ourselves. We already knew that we wouldn't be able to return to the academy before the Blade Dance... So—"

"You're... disbanding... the party?"

Having a stunned expression, Ellis looked at her two teammates.

"..."

"N-No, I will not allow that!"

"Captain, we're—"

"We had promised! To participate in the Blade Dance together!"

Ellis shouted like a child throwing a tantrum .

"We aren't able to. So—"

"But we really wanted to fight together... So, we'll like to entrust our wish to you, captain."

"Rekka, Reishia..."

"Please, fight for us too."

"I want to see Captain's blade dance. A blade dance, like a gale, that blows everything."

"..."

Ellis—

Firmly bit her lips and clenched her fist.

Both sides refused to give up— Their glaring gazes ran into each other.

The one who sighed first was Ellis.

"...I understand. You two win."

"Captain!"

The two girls let out a lively scream.

"—Claire Rouge."

Ellis calmly turned towards Claire.

It wasn't the lifeless face from just now.

It was the face of a gallant knight.

"I, Ellis Fahrengart, request to join Team Scarlet."

"Welcome, Ellis~"

Claire smiled and stretched out her right hand.

Ellis grabbed that hand in return.

"I'll prove to that person my way of a knight."

Part 3

The strongest blade dancer— Ren Ashbell.

Three years ago, since the day she crossed her blade with hers, Velsaria's life changed.

On that day, she received a great shock.

Before that day, Velsaria had taken pride in being the strongest knight.

It wasn't like she was making light of the girl, who appeared before her eyes, for being a title-less newcomer two years younger than her.

No matter who it was, as long as they faced her, she would wield her full strength and strike them down.

That was her belief as a Knight.

She fought with all her strength— And then, she was defeated.

However, what grew in her heart at that time was not hatred.

It was more like a sense of veneration towards her.

It was something trivial; she too was, like Ellis and the other girls, fascinated by Ren Ashbell's blade dance.

So, what she received a shock from was not the defeat.

It was the eyes that the strongest girl faced at her, the loser.

What was reflected in the girl's jet-black pupils—

Was not hostility, not pity, not contempt— There wasn't even any emotions.

Velsaria was not even reflected in the girl's eyes.

...It was unforgivable. There was no way she could could accept that.

She would defeat that strongest girl and make her **acknowledge her existence**.

This was probably— in a sense, an emotion that was comparable to love.

(...Soon, I can fight her again in the Blade Dance.)

Any other things were irrelevant.

(Even if my mind and flesh are consumed by this « heart»—)

Late at night. Deep inside the «Spirit Forest»—

Loitering alone in the darkness, Velsaria had been suppressing her feelings of haughtiness.

At this moment, the bushes behind her moved slightly.

"—Is that you, witch!"

"Ha, as expected of you, you were able to detect my presence~"

There was the voluptuous sound of laughter heard within the forest.

The one who appeared was —the Cursed Armament maker— Vivian Melosa.

"You did well yesterday, because of you I got good data~"

"I knew it, it was you who implanted those Cursed Armament Seals on them."

Velsaria emitted a fierce murderous aura. Leaves of the trees swayed like they were astir.

"Yes, but, they broke immediately. Even for the famous Areshia Spirit Academy, I can't seem to come across a fine specimen like yourself!"

"Disappear. I told you to never appear in front of me again."

"Wah, you're pretty cold. I just came here to check out the corrosion rate of the «heart»."

"I have no intentions to assist your research. The « heart» is being fully controlled."

Vivian Melosa laughed out loud.

"Please stop acting tough. For **a Cursed Armament Seal engraved on a heart**— the only one who could control such a thing is possibly the Dusk Witch. If you just leave it like that, you will die in a few years~"

"Not a problem. As long as I live till the Blade Dance two weeks later, it is enough."

"That troubles me. You are actually a specimen I took a liking to—"

In an instant, Velsaria turned towards Vivian Melosa and released her elemental waffe.

A lump of compressed divine power blew apart the trees in the forest and gouged out the space before her.

After the dust had settled, there was no one there. There was only the dense darkness.

"...That damned witch."

Facing the empty space, Velsaria bitterly groaned.

Thump—, the «heart» ached.

Note: Pending TLC, other than that, you're not missing too much, I think...

Chapter 9: The Strongest Elementalist

Part 1

It was the day of the team battle.

The members of Team Scarlet gathered before the « Stone Circle».

It was a «Gate» for accessing Astral Zero that only a few places had, even in the Ordesia Empire.

Countless students had already entered the spectators' stands surrounding the grand arena.

This was a fight between the academy's strongest Blade Dancer Velsaria and Team Scarlet, that had rapidly risen to 6th place, so of course this match was deemed important.

With the newest technology by countless research groups provided to the Areishia Spirit Academy, it was now possible to view the blade dances occurring inside of Astral Zero.

Within the stands before the screen, in addition to the large number of students, there were also members of the Sylphid Knights.

And at the front of Team Scarlet, were Kamito and Ellis.

Through Fianna's healing power, Kamito was finally able to recover to the point where he could move around again.

But the injuries he sustained were deeper than he imagined, and it was still very difficult for him to hold a sword.

Glancing at her teammates, Claire began to outline their tactics.

"Ellis, I'll leave the front to you. After all, you're the strongest in melee combat."

"Leave it to me. I'll create an opening through Aneue's elemental waffe."

With a stern, valiant, and courageous expression Ellis declared her resolve.

"My task is to defeat the «Silent Fortress» right!?"

"And I am to defend and support you through my rituals."

Rinslet and Fianna respectively accepted their own task.

Claire, who was the most balanced of all, was in charge of relaying orders to the 3 people who were respectively in charge of attacking, supporting, and defending.

Claire strongly believed that even if the power of an individual could not defeat Velsaria, if they worked as a team, their combined powers should be able to overwhelm her.

Even though the squadmates Velsaria chose were the strongest seniors in the Sylphid Knights, they were just a group of random people.

Without proper team combat training, it seemed Velsaria couldn't even organize their strategy as their commander.

"With our team, it is possible—"

Claire strongly grasped her pendant.

At this time, the crowd was split between Team Scarlet and Velsaria, and the cheering could be heard from the stands.

Velsaria Eva with her snow white coat walked out.

Following her were the ex-Sylphid Knights that defected.

Arriving in front of Claire, Velsaria stood.

Her cold ice blue pupils were glaring at Ellis.

"Ellis, I thought you were smarter than this."

Ellis immediately raised her head, and stared firmly at Velsaria.

She could not lose, for the sake of her teammates who gave her a chance to join the Blade Dance festival.

For her trust in her fellow Sylphid Knights.

And finally, for her idol that was once the strongest in her heart, the knight that was standing right in front of her.

"I will prove to you my way of the Knights— and I shall start by defeating my dream which was once you."

"Stupid. So be it, I shall crush you."

—And finally, the bell rang signaling the start of the festival.

At the same time, The Stone Ring— a relic from an age of myths started to spin, and opened the door to Astral Zero.

Part 2

The place where Team Scarlet was sent to was an open forest.

Because of the surrounding trees that were blocking their vision, it would be quite difficult to find the opposing team.

After quickly confirming the 3 people that were also transported—

"—Go, Scarlet!"

Claire swung her whip down, and summoned her flame clad hell cat.

The other 3 also quickly summoned their spirits.

"Ellis and I shall be in charge of scouting. Fianna, the surroundings around our base are yours."

Claire quickly gave orders but—

"—There is no need for that, Claire Rouge."

"...!?"

After hearing that voice— Everyone in Team Scarlet froze.

Raising their heads, there was—

A giant fortress floating in the sky.

Equipping her elemental waffe— "Silent Fortress", Velsaria appeared.

"Velsaria!? You're alone!?"

Claire screamed in surprise.

"I do not need people that are in the way. Your only opponent is just me alone."

"—She's coming!"

Rinslet screeched out.

At that exact moment, the layered composite armor that covered the fortress started moving and countless cannons appeared out of it.

Like an Emperor overlooking the ground, Velsaria waved her hand.

"—Disappear before my fortress spirit!"

Countless cannons fired.

Accompanying the giant shockwave on the earth, a rain of bombardment fired upon the ground.

The continuous artillery shelling struck the ground, rolling up a lot of dust.

Overwhelming power. That is the destruction from the strongest elemental waffe.

"Boring. Trash would still be trash—"

In an instant, the lush green forest turned into a barren wasteland with craters.

After the dust had settled, there was—

"What?"

Velsaria's expression froze.

A blonde girl holding an ice bow standing with a smile .

"You managed to strike down the bombardment—"

Rinslet proudly brushed her hair.

"Ha, I will never allow anyone who can equip their elemental waffe faster than me~"

"...! Preposterous—"

Velsaria then immediately unfolded the composite armor and blocked the ice arrows—

"It's not over yet!"

Without a single pause, Rinslet immediately released more arrows.

The ice sliced through the air and flew over— all the 4 arrows hit!

However, with only that degree of power, it was unable to strike through the fortress spirit's armor.

"Foolish. Before my «Silent Fortress», arrows of your level are nothing to me—"

"You sure?"

"What—"

When the cannons were preparing to fire once again—

Velsaria finally realized. Rinslet's goal was not to deal any damage to the armor.

The elemental waffe «Freezing Arrow» of the high level spirit Fenrir had an additional effect— ice-nine.

Because it was ice that could never melt, the ultimate composite armor had now been frozen.

"It is just as you predicted, Claire~"

"Yes, even though Dreadnought's physical resistance was of the highest class, it has a very low resistance against spells— Thus your high level spirit Fenrir's elemental waffe can definitely break through it.

"...!"

Velsaria became slightly worried.

Right then her fortress spirit could not switch back to the cannon mode. Also, because of the ice on the surface, the mobility was reduced— a bad situation.

"Ellis, it's time to fight back!"

"Ahh!"

Claire and Ellis sang their summoning ritual.

And at the time when the fortress could not evade they —

"—Devour, oh crimson searing fireball!"

"—Wind, turn into a blade that cuts through everything!"

Dodging was impossible. In an instant, a shock wave shook the air.

"Success...!"

Even with layers over layers of composite armor protecting, it was still impossible to come out undamaged from direct attacks.

Although...

"—So you are only at that level, Calamity Queen's younger sister."

"Wha—?"

The ground shook again.

With the wind, the sand blew at Claire's body.

In the middle of the crater that was seemly caused by a meteor—

The «Silent Fortress» stood there ominously.

"...!?"

"Causing me to fall down, unworthy of praise."

Through the shock wave caused by the fall, the ice that was on the armor shattered.

"But, this is the end. My fortress spirit is a ground spirit— I will become indomitable on the ground."

Part 3

As soon as she declared that— from the «Silent Fortress»'s side, there came 2 giant robotic arms.

The blades coming from the arms swept and cut down the nearby trees—

Such an overwhelming power. But that movement had a lot of openings.

Ellis swung her elemental waffe— «Ray Hawk».

The wind from the head flew towards Velsaria.

But then, «Silent Fortress» disappeared.

"...!?"

And suddenly, Velsaria immediately appeared in front of Ellis.

As if she was sliding, her mobility was totally different from when she was flying.

"—Ellis!"

Claire released her Flame Whip and swiftly caught the fortress spirit's hand.

The strike was slowed down— but that was it.

That strength was overwhelmingly strong.

"Leave it to me!"

The one blocking the strike was a knight with a shield.

Fianna's knight spirit «Georgios»

The friction between the iron boots and the ground propelled the knight and it caught the fortress spirit with its body.

BAMM. But even the knight spirit which has a really strong defense could not handle the full force of the fortress spirit. The armor started to twist and the shield cracked—

"...Tolerate it, Georgios!"

Fianna cried in pain.

"The lost blade dancer— I thought you were smarter."

"True— B-But, I also kind of like my idiot self~"

Velsaria proceeded to swing her robotic arm down without mercy.

"I will not allow that!"

"...!"

Immediately, Claire jumped towards the attacking arm .

The blade arm was struggling with the fire whip. Just then, Velsaria fell into their plan— that fire whip was not supposed to stop the movement, but to get close.

(—At this distance it would not be blocked by the armor!)

Claire then revealed one of her specialties, which was high speed casting.

Towards Velsaria who was shocked, Claire released her strongest spell.

"Dance, oh crimson flame that calls upon destruction— Hell Blaze!"

Inside the whirlpool of crimson flame, Velsaria was burned all over her body.

"...Ah!"

It was the first time she released a cry of pain.

"Damn, flies—"

As the arm was returning and was going to attack Claire—

"Aneue, realize the truth!"

Hon— An amazing gale blew from above.

Surrounded by wind and swiftly attacking from above ; a skill Ellis specialized in.

With her elemental waffe «Ray Hawk», it pierced through Velsaria's chest.

"G-Gah..."

Then—

"—O wind, blow wildly!"

And with the release of the spell—

A giant chaotic tornado blew away the «Silent Fortress » and Velsaria's body,

Bang— The wind stopped and it hit the ground.

"Hah, Hah—"

Through the attack that burned through all her energy, Ellis immediately sat down.

Claire also breathed a sigh of relief and licked her lips.

"You are too proud, Velsaria. You foolishly came out by yourself—"

"The one who's foolish is you, Claire Rouge"

"Huh—"

Looking at the dust that was starting to settle—

A giant shadow was moving.

"For a truly strong person, a person without any more strength is just a thing in the way."

Once the sand settled, the «Silent Fortress» appeared once again.

Just like a wall, the composite armor did not have a single trace of damage.

"Disappear—"

The armor instantly released— countless cannons all fired at once.

Part 4

Kamito strongly grasped his fist, and looked towards the monitor.

Claire's movement, it looked more like trying to fight a giant beast than a blade dance.

Even if it was unimaginable— This fight was going to be very close.

But looking at Velsaria again, it seemed like she was filled with vigor once again.

To maintain that type of spirit, you are supposed to use up a lot of Divine power—

"..."

Through the giant monitor, Ellis was bravely standing against Velsaria.

(Heh, she can still stand up...)

Seems like leaving it to Claire was a right choice. With Kamito, even if he can relieve her, he can't give her the courage to stand again.

The strength of a party, is not just shown in a fight.

To be able to let a comrade stand again after losing all hope— that also shows the power of a party.

(No matter what, she is a great leader~)

Observing the intense fight and giving calm orders was Claire's job.

Correctly analyzing each person's strength and coordinating them can bring the power of a party to a new level.

To be able to make different people specializing in different things cooperate, he believed normal people would not have been able to do that.

(Maybe, she might have stronger leadership skills than her sister)

Kamito surprisingly thought.

(But, that Velsaria is overwhelmingly strong.)

(Doesn't matter if it is because of the contracted spirit or her determination that made her stronger, compared to her 3 years ago—)

"Kamito, what's the matter?"

Est worriedly looked towards Kamito.

"Haha, there's no problem."

Kamito lightly patted Est's silver hair.

(—I believe this fight will become more intense.)

Part 5

And at the same time the cannons lit up—

"—Freezing Arrows!"

Rinslet also released her elemental waffe.

As a diamond flying in thin air, the ice was broken when it was hit.

"...! Is that fortress girl's divine power unlimited!?"

Rinslet started to sweat.

Comparing by power, the «Freezing Arrow» immediately topped it, but when they are continuously fired, Velsaria's elemental waffe had an overwhelming advantage.

—(We can't proceed this way, we will lose.)

"..., My knight spirit is also at its limit."

Fianna breathed heavily.

The shield which was always resisting the cannons, also had multiple cracks.

And through the sudden attack, Claire and Ellis also could not get closer.

In front of the undamaged fortress, Team Scarlet's actions had been sealed shut.

That way, they could only patiently wait till Velsaria's divine power is emptied— But the knight spirit that was protecting them could not hold out for even 10 more seconds.

"So, we still can't defeat Aneue—"

Ellis regrettably bit her lips.

"You sure are different, are you already showing weakness at this time?"

"B-But—"

Ellis looked at her side and stared at Claire.

"Didn't you already make a promise with those two people?"

"...Ha ha, that is true."

Ellis slowly lifted her head up.

(That's true— I cannot be defeated here.)

(I already have made a promise with Rakka and Reishia.)

(And, I also made a vow to show Velsaria my way of the Knights.)

(Escaping is not an option.)

"But, what should we do? With the barrage, we can't even get close."

"...I still have a secret weapon. I'll make the chance."

"Is it possible?"

"I don't know. But, this is the only way left."

Claire who was looking forward spoke,

"—Mm. True."

Ellis also nodded.

"Claire! I can't hold any more!"

Fianna's scream was filled with pain.

The knight spirit who was blocking the barrage also finally knelt down.

With the merciless barrage, it turned back into light orbs and disappeared.

At that moment, Claire started to run.

When all the cannons were focused on the knight spirit , there was a single opening— the chance was then.

At the same time, Ellis also started to run in the opposite direction.

Velsaria made an instant choice and decided to hit Claire first.

Aiming at the captain was a reasonable choice. But, Claire had already anticipated that.

"—Scarlet!"

With the scream, the elemental waffe turned back into its cat form.

It ran through the rain of barrage, and slowly approached Velsaria.

"Futile!"

Velsaria who roared, used the attacking arm and struck the hell cat.

Next, the cannon focused on Scarlet— Though noticing Claire's approach, Velsaria realized without her elemental waffe, she would not cause any threat.

Claire who approached then put her hand on the armor of the fortress spirit.

Then— released a spirit magic.

"Thou's ice heart, aware of my anger and lament— Blood Aria!"

That magic made whatever the palm touched vibrate in high frequency, and caused it to be overheated.

Because it could only be released through direct contact, it was a very difficult magic to use in battle.

"Idiot, you really think you can pierce through my fortress spirit's armor with magic?"

Velsaria said in an icy tone.

Because of the attacking arm, Claire's small body hit the ground with a strong impact.

The next moment—

"—Freezing Arrow!"

Rinslet released her ice arrows, and it pierced through the fortress spirit's armor.

"Didn't I tell you— What!?"

Plick— the armor's surface cracked.

Velsaria opened her eyes in shock.

"Looks like... It is useful~"

Claire who was on the ground wiped her blood from her lips.

"Using the difference in temperature and causing destruction— T-That was your goal!?"

"Thats just a basic group strategy when you have a fire spirit and an ice spirit~"

That was Claire's secret weapon.

Even though the success rate was low, but they managed to finally find a weakness.

"...!"

Plick *Plick*— The cracks on the armor increased.

At this time—

"Ahhhhh!"

The gale that was surrounding Ellis released her «Ray Hawk».

With her destruction force, she charged with intense speed.

The lance broke the armor, and pierced through Velsaria's chest.

"...! Ellis!"

Ellis' brown eyes glared at Velsaria's icy blue eyes.

The strongest knight in the Academy started to show some weariness.

"—O wind, blow wildly!"

With the same stance the «Ray Hawk» charged in—

Ellis released her strongest wind out.

The chaotic gale crushed the weakened elemental waffe.

Velsaria, whose armor had been crushed flew in the air, painfully dropped down on the ground.

"Hah, Hah, Hah—"

Ellis limply knelt on the floor.

"...Did we... succeed...?"

Velsaria was currently on the floor.

Seemingly unconscious.

"I..."

"Huh?"

Nope, she did not lose her consciousness.

Velsaria started to shake violently.

"...I, ...Absolutely... Cannot lose..."

"...What?"

Claire raised her brow.

The scene before their eyes was unbelievable.

The elemental waffe which was supposed to be crushed—

"It's starting to morph into a different thing!"

"Aneue...?"

Ellis remained, not knowing what to do.

"—Ah—AHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

Inside the forest of Astral Zero, echoed Velsaria's roar.

Part 6

"What is that...!?"

Kamito yelled out.

The students who were looking through the monitor to watch the battle started to run for their lives.

Velsaria's elemental waffe was starting to take a very ominous form.

The body that was covered with pitch black armor, was just like a knight risen from the dead.

If the divine power was capable of being seen with one's naked eyes, it was surely not a good sight.

"That is a Cursed Armament Seal, Kamito."

"Huh?"

Kamito looked at the expressionless Est.

"Also, she is now going out of control. If it continues like this—"

"Velsaria, implanted a Cursed Armament Seal!?"

Kamito worriedly asked for confirmation.

(Why...?)

Why did the Academy's strongest blade dancer need to rely on those items?

(Velsaria, already has been forced into this situation...)

Kamito tightly grasped his left hand.

(Even if the reason is not clear, I do know that the fight 3 years ago really changed her.)

Through the monitor, the pitch black knight roared out .

Noticing the change, Velsaria's teammates hurriedly came out.

They were those 4 people that were once part of the Sylphid Knights. They were probably forced to not come out till now.

And to her teammates that hurriedly approached her —

The pitch black knight used its hand and struck them over.

Blood spurred out. The girls from the knights were slammed on the ground.

From the right shoulder to the chest, the girls suffered severe injuries.

"...!!?"

Kamito started to have a disgusted feeling.

From the injuries that were caused directly from a spirit, it proved that the spirit was slowly getting out of control.

The emergency bell rang— the match had been stopped.

But even then, Claire and the others did not want to retreat.

(N-No...!)

The black mist that was being sent out from the pitch black knight, like tentacles, trapped Claire and the others

and caught their limbs. Even though Scarlet and Fenrir tried to bite through it, those two also got caught immediately.

(...Don't tell me, is she trying to drain power from Scarlet?)

Only Ellis stood up, wobbly.

Using her elemental waffe to blow off the nearby black mist, she was trying to protect Claire and the others.

Kamito though—

"—Est. I have a request."

Closely grasping Est's cute hands.

Even though Est had an expression that wanted to say something, when she looked at Kamito—

"—I am Kamito's sword. Everything is for you."

She seemingly gave up and nodded.

"But, please be careful. With your current body, and with my form as elemental waffe, you can probably only last for 10 seconds,"

"Ahh, that's enough, Est."

Kamito kindly patted her silver hair, and started to release his elemental waffe.

"Dispassionate Queen of Steel, the sacred sword that destroys evil— now form a sword of steel and be the power in my hand!"

Est's body slowly turned into light orbs and disappeared into thin air—

And in Kamito's hand, appeared a silver blade with shining lights.

Part 7

"...D-Damn...!"

Ellis used her elemental waffe's lance, and slashed through the pitch black knight's mist.

Even with just a slight touch, your divine power could still be drained. Velsaria's teammates who had accidentally approached were already bound together and unconscious.

Fianna and Rinslet who almost used all their divine power also fainted on the floor. Even though Claire still managed to stay conscious—

"...Ellis, H-Hurry and escape to the door..."

"Don't joke around. I am a Sylphid Knight, my mission is to protect the students."

While talking to the fallen Claire, at the same time, she also released multiple gales towards Velsaria.

But, it could not even slightly damage the armor. Even if the form changed, it still seemed to be as durable as that fortress spirit.

The only thing that could manage to change the spirit into this ominous form—

There could be only one reason why.

"Why—? Why have you implanted a Cursed Armament Seal! Aneue!"

(I do not understand.)

(A person who I once thought to be perfect, why do you have to do such things?)

Towards Velsaria who could not hear anything, Ellis struck again with her swift speed.

Because of the anger that increased the power of the gale, it pierced through the armor—

"—O wind, blow wildly!"

But, the elemental waffe lance only maintained its form inside the armor without any movement.

(...I cannot generate any more wind!?)

From the crack of the armor came the black mist— the divine power of Velsaria, followed the lance up into Ellis' arm, and started to drain her power.

Velsaria used her arms, and slowly picked up her body by her neck.

"Ellis!"

Claire screamed out.

(...Is this the end? I...)

(...My consciousness is slowly fading away. Darkness is slowly enveloping me.)

(...I didn't get to protect anyone. Not even my comrades, not even Aneue.)

"Kamito, sorry... I—"

At that moment. A sword immediately flashed through the air.

"...!?"

Next moment, Ellis' body was in the air.

From behind, a hand appeared and hugged her tightly.

Slowly, she opened her eyes.

"Wha—?"

In front of her eyes, the one that appeared was Kazahaya Kamito.

Ellis right now was being princess craddled in the air.

"...Kamito?"

"—Ellis, thanks for protecting my comrades~"

Kamito smiled and dropped to the ground, and semi-regrettably let Ellis down.

...Unable to understand the current situation, Ellis blinked blankly.

Kamito then looked towards Velsaria's direction, and grasped his elemental waffe sword.

"—I will not allow you to touch my comrades!"

Part 8

From under his bandages, surged a huge intense burning sensation.

(...Tch, the injury opened again...)

Tightly clenching his teeth to contain his cry of pain, Kamito cursed in his heart.

Even though I said something cool, I still have a giant hole in my stomach.

Not just blade dancing, it's already really difficult just standing.

"I knew it, using the Demon Slayer Sacred Sword in this condition is really tiring~"

He smiled wryly.

"Y-Y-Y-Y-You Idiot!"

Claire's whip made snapping sounds.

"Ouch!"

Kamito yelled in pain.

Gogogogogogo...!

Turning his head back, there was Clare holding her whip with her arms crossed.

(...Scary. Its like her head has 2 horns...)

"W-What are you doing! Treat people with injuries better!"

Kamito glared at her with his teary eyes.

"Then why are people with injuries running here!?"

Her red twin tails angrily stood up.

Kamito sighed, and placed his hand on Claire's head.

"Rushing towards here when my comrades are in danger, isn't that normal?"

"...Hah, y-you sure are an idiot."

Claire looked to one side trying to hide her blushing face.

"Kamito, w-with your injuries..."

Ellis spoke with high concern.

Kamito once again turned himself around, and kindly placed his hand on her shoulders.

"Ellis, you worked hard and did well. You are already an excellent knight."

"Kamito..."

Ellis' eyes showed happiness.

At that moment—

"...Oh... Ohhh ahhhhh..."

"...!?"

Those 3 immediately turned towards the source of the noise.

The black knight who had lost one of its arms yelled out in pain.

With that form, it was just like a body being possessed by a lost spirit.

"Velsaria..."

Kamito wobbly walked over and held tightly onto Terminus Est.

With his current condition, he could only maintain Est's elemental waffe form for only about 10 seconds.

"Kamito, are you seriously going to fight this thing!?"

"Ah, after all, she is the one I have to defeat by my own hand."

"Kamito, what are you say—"

Kamito grasped his sword, and stared at Velsaria.

"...Ren... Ashbel... l..."

"Velsaria, do you really want to fight against 'her'?"

Although he never expected an answer, Kamito still asked.

"...Ohhh... Oh..."

The only reply that he got, was the roar filled with chaos from its throat.

"Then, before the strongest blade dancer, I shall be your opponent!"

As he declared— Kamito started to charge forward.

At the same time, Velsaria who had lost one of her arms also started to charge.

"Kamito!"

Ellis' voice slowly faded in the noise created by the sword fight.

"Ohhhh!"

Blocking Velsaria's assault, Kamito swung his sword.

The pitch black armor cracked open. With another strike, he smashed through it.

Sparks flew everywhere. At the same time, a pain like electricity shocked Kamito's body.

At the instant Kamito screamed in pain, the armored Velsaria grabbed Kamito's arms. But—

"Don't look down on my comrades!"

As if in reply to Kamito's scream, Terminus Est released a bright light.

A light that seems to purify, it blew away the mist which was Velsaria's divine power.

Following that, Kamito slashed towards the head of the pitch black armor. With that, he released another

strike— the black knight was not able to keep up with the flashes and flashes of attacks.

"Strong...!"

Ellis exclaimed.

Looking at the blade dance, you could never tell that Kamito was heavily injured with his overwhelming strength.

"That's just, like..."

Whom Ellis Fahrengart envied, the strongest blade dancer.

As if seeing the same thing from 3 years ago—

"—Ahhhhhh!"

Velsaria screeched out a terrifying sound.

The air seemed like it was vibrating, smashing Kamito's body and blowing him away.

And then smashing him onto the ground heavily.

Crimson red blood started to stain the bandage on his chest while pain spread all over his body.

Terminus Est's light started to fade away, signaling that the fighting was almost near its end.

"..."

With the support of his hands, Kamito stood up.

Velsaria's ominous divine power then started to spread all over the ground like a mist,

(So the source of this mist is her heart...)

Kamito's extraordinary observing skills told him that conclusion.

While desperately tolerating the pain, Kamito re-grasped his blade and lit up his sword.

(With Terminus Est's anti-curse ability, I might be able to—)

At this time, like an obstacle, Velsaria's elemental waffe started to change once again.

The severed arm slowly morphed like clay, and changed into a giant lance.

No, rather than a lance— it looked more like a ram.

"...Looks like its time to determine the winner. Just what I wanted..."

"Kamito!"

Ellis slowly walked over to Kamito with her blade as a support stick.

"Ellis, I'm sorry."

"Kamito, that thing is dangerous."

"What do you mean?"

"My lancing skills were taught to me by Aneue."

"...I see."

Velsaria once again roared out a sound like it came from the ground.

"...Ren... Ash... bell!"

"...? Aneue actually mistook Kamito as Ren Ashbell?"

Ellis raised her eyebrows, in question.

Of course, the current Velsaria already lost all logic.

"It's time to see who wins. Ellis, please help me a little."

"...I understand."

Ellis nodded.

"Kamito, I beg of you, please save Aneue."

Kamito then proceeded to channel all of his remaining divine power to the sword in his hand.

The silver sword once again started to glow with all its might. Ellis also started to create gales of wind.

This strike was the strongest attack he could use with his current body.

(I can only bet everything on this.)

"Lets go, Velsaria Eva Fahrengart!"

"Ahhhhhhh!"

Velsaria charged while creating a trail of dust around her.

With Kamito's body becoming lighter through Ellis' wind,

With a violent gale behind his back pushing him, Kamito accelerated again.

With the instant clash, the area around them was immediately clouded by the flashing lights.

Just barely dodging Velsaria's attack—

The Demon Slayer Sacred Sword which was shinning with a bright white light, totally pierced Velsaria's armor and the 'heart'.

From the tip of the blade, the bright light started to overflow.

(Just like what happened— 3 years ago.)

"...Velsaria, you shall be saved by me."

With his blade in her chest, Kamito slowly whispered.

The pitch black armor shattered into powder, and Velsaria's beautiful face appeared once again.

"Ren Ashbell—"

Her sakura colored lips, slowly moved.

Part 9

(So it is like this... Kazehaya Kamito, **you are—**)

In the moment she was pierced, she realized something.

The person in front of her, was the exact same person that pierced her chest 3 years ago.

"...I have been defeated once again..."

Velsaria smiled gently.

As if a heavy worry disappeared, she had a very stable expression.

But for some reason, she could not feel any remorse from that time.

This is because, Kazehaya Kamito's black eyes, were looking straight at her.

"...!?"

Dub dub— the Cursed Armament Seal started to beat once again.

With her face hot, Velsaria slightly moved her teary eyes away from Kamito.

"Velsaria, you are strong. But, that strength will one day snap like a sword."

"That is true... But, I only seek this power so you can acknowledge me— But it seems like it wasn't enough~"

"—You are wrong then."

"What?"

"You lost, but it is not because of insufficient strength. You only lost because you were alone. But I have my comrades, my friends I met in the Academy."

"..."

"That, is something even the me from 3 years ago— Ren Ashbell would not have."

Upon Velsaria's blushing face, comes a cool breeze.

(These are— Ellis' winds.)

At that last instant, it was that same wind that accelerated Kamito who was heavily injured.

That same wind that carried Ellis' thought and her belief as a knight.

"Ren Ashbell, I—"

With her smile and her beautiful golden hair swaying with the wind—

Velsaria Eva Fahrengart finally was defeated.

And— the beating 'heart' also ceased all movement.

Part 10

"Arara, that 'heart' broke~ That was, after all, a rarely found piece of merchandise~"

At the forest not near the Academy—

Vivian Melosa unhappily bit her lips.

After all, she only came to watch the fight to gather more data.

"The direct implantation of Cursed Armament Seals on a 'heart' will still take a while until it can be used without any problems~"

Releasing a sigh, she turned off the final switch.

"But, that boy was pretty interesting. And since that Jio from the Kyōdouin was also taken away, I shall play with him the next time~"

"The students are not your toys, Vivian Melosa."

"...!?"

From that voice coming from nowhere, Vivian Melosa — felt a chill on her back.

"Is that you!? The Dusk Witch!?"

"Hmph, how nostalgic. My good-for-nothing student."

Greyworth Ciel Mais slowly walked out from the deep forest.

"...! Why—?"

"Executing such an action that attracted people's attention, everyone would have noticed. And yesterday after the 2 girls went out of control, we did a little research. We realized that the Cursed Armament Seals were the same as what you studied back when you were still a student. Looks like you still haven't improved from the past~"

Like a teacher lecturing a student, Greyworth kindly said.

"I still can't believe that you actually started to take action because of those negligible students—"

"Hmph, the last time I was sent here was a few years ago. For me to come back here to rule out the nasty pests, it seems like it is destiny."

Vivian Melosa immediately held her breath, and her body started to shake from fear.

"Next, for you to attack my important students, it is necessary for you to take some punishment~"

—At the same time, Greyworth's right hand started to glow and compress into a pitch black matter.

From this weird condition, the one that was appearing could not be a contracted spirit— it was a **demon**.

"Its been a long time since you had food, 'Earl', go ahead and enjoy yourself~"

Greyworth licked her devilish lips.

"Ah... Ahh... Ahhhhhh..."

Vivian Melosa cried out from her throat.

From being scared, it completely turned into a state of panic.

Looking at her trying to crawl away to escape—

"—Don't try to escape~ The punishment is necessary!"

"Heh, Ah, Ahhh..."

The pitch black did its final assault.

Ka *Crack* *Chouk* *Gulp*...

The sound of chewing echoed throughout the forest.

"Ara Ara. I still needed to handle the final situation, such an idiotic disciple~"

She then playfully touched her glasses, and slowly walked away.

Epilogue

Part 1

Velsaria Eva's body was being ruined by the Cursed Armament Seal.

Although they could erase the Cursed Armament Seal engraved on her «Heart» with the power of the Demon King Killing Sacred Sword —Terminus Est— (Demon Slayer), the curse, which had accumulated over several years and blasted out in one go, had destroyed her channel that ruled over the renewal of her divine power.

It was unknown how many years it would take for her to comeback as an elementalist.

Also, even if Cursed Armament Seal disappeared, it did not mean her crimes would disappear.

Ellis and Kamito sent off Velsaria, who was escorted by Spirit Knights to be transported to the capital, to the front of the academy gate.

Getting on the escort carriage, Velsaria had been making a peaceful expression.

Due to the fact that she implanted the Cursed Armament Seal, it might be that her mind had also been slightly ruined.

She was currently not a beautiful knight of ice, but she seemed somewhat like a normal girl.

"...Ellis, I am sorry."

Velsaria turned towards Ellis and lowered her head.

"Please raise your head, Aneue. I will always be waiting for you."

Velsaria nodded, and this time, she turned towards Kamito.

"I will leave my younger sister in your care. She is clumsy, but she is, surprisingly, cute sometimes."

"Ah, ah, I know."

"Ka-Kamito!? Aneue, what are you even saying?!"

With her face turning bright red, Ellis shouted.

"Ellis, I am looking forward to your efforts at the Blade Dance."

Patting Ellis lightly on the head, Velsaria got onto the carriage.

Kamito stood in line with Ellis and sent off the leaving carriage.

"—Kamito, thank you. You helped me save Aneue."

"The one who saved her was you, Ellis. Not me."

Kamito shook his head calmly.

"..."

Suddenly, a strange silence arrived.

"Erm, Kamito, about the day before yesterday, the « Valentia Holy Festival»."

"Oh?"

Ellis took out a small box from somewhere.

It was a box prettily wrapped with a ribbon.

"...This is?"

"Th-This is only because I have approved you as a comrade of the Knights. Other than that, th-there's not even a shred of any other intentions!"

Ellis sharply turned her face away and handed her chocolate out.

"Ha ha, thank you Ellis. You're really a person with a stiff sense of obligation."

"Um, but i-it has ... n-nothing to do with obligation."

Ellis pouted her lips and mumbled,

Part 2

Several days later, a party for Team Scarlet's selection to participate in the Blade Dance was held.

By defeating the first ranking «Silent Fortress», their ranking went up to the third place in one go.

Similarly moving up the rankings, the upperclassman veteran «Team Wyvern» and together with «Team

Cernunnos» that had the Druid girl were selected to participate in the Blade Dance.

The departure of the ship that would head to the venue in Astral Zero was one week later.

The party was held in Claire's room.

A gigantic chocolate cake was sitting on the table.

It was almost like the size of a wedding cake.

"You girls... Are you seriously eating this whole thing?"

Kamito groaned with a deadpan look.

"We don't have a choice. We had a lot of chocolate for the Valentia Holy Festival left over, after all."

"Kamito-san, a-are you saying that you are not going to eat my cake?"

Rinslet frowned with an unhappy look.

"You made this? ...You really are a high-spec ojou-sama."

"Milady is top-notch even compared to pastry shops."

Carol smiled, placing her hand at her mouth

"Carol also helped with the taste test."

"Yes, I am in bliss eating Milady's cakes everyday."

"Hum, Carol, you also have to work a little."

...The other party was the never-changing low-spec maid.

"Ah, Kamito-kun, Claire and I also helped!"

Mugyuu. The sensation of soft breasts was pressed onto him.

It was the immodest second princess.

"Fianna, you..."

The instant he heard Fianna helped, Kamito only felt a bad premonition.

"Fufu, not only the cake, you can eat me too!"

She whispered, mixed with her breath, at his ear. Kamito turned bright red.

"W-What are you saying—?"

"Kamito, you can eat me too?"

"Est, are you saying it, knowing what it means?!"

"...Ka-Kamito, you-you pervert..."

Gogogogogo

"Wait, Claire! This is a misunderstanding!"

At that moment, the doorbell rang.

"I-It seems like Ellis is here."

Kamito went towards the door like he was escaping in a fluster.

As he opened the door— his eyes widened.

"...!"

The one standing there was—

Ellis wearing a party dress that had an opening at the region of her large breasts.

Her face was applied with light make-up and her lips were coloured red.

"E-Ellis,... what's with your attire?"

"Be-Because it is a party, I came with the proper attire."

Two girls were giggling behind Ellis, whose face was dyed red.

They were Rakka and Reishia. ...It seemed like she was tricked by those two again.

"I-Is... it strange?"

Ellis was asking with her cheeks slightly dyed red and an upward glance.

"No, it suits you. ...You're really pretty!"

Kamito scratched his head as he replied—

Gogogogo

He felt dreadful glares from behind.

"...!?"

As he turned around, The ojou-samas were glaring at Kamito with "Grrr" faces.

"Wh-What?"

"S-Shut up, just eat the cake!"

"Muhh"

Claire stabbed the cake with a fork and stuffed it into his mouth.

Fianna, Rinslet... and even Est—

They went on forcefully stuffing cake into his mouth.

(This is absurd...)

While Kamito was surrounded by morose beautiful girls, he sighed a heavy breath.

—A week later, the «Blade Dance» finally drew open its curtains.

Afterword

Author's

—Y-You mean for me to put on an even sexier attire, right?!

With that, it has been roughly a 3-month period since our last contact. This is Shimizu Yuu. I present you the third installment of the academy harem x battle comedy "Seirei Tsukai no Blade Dance" series that started at the end of last year!

To hand over chocolates to the boys they like— The academy's ojou-sama are in-preparation and restless of the arrival of the «Valentia Holy Festival», an event that sets girls' hearts racing. Amongst them, Ellis, Captain of the Sylphid Knights that protects the public morals of the academy, tried to offer a certain act of gratitude to Kamito—

"I-I'm now your exclusive-use maid from now. ...I-Is that alright?"

There's the battle of love between beautiful girls where sparks fly. There's the darkness of the «Cursed Armament Seals» that undermines Academy Town.

And then, there's the academy's strongest elementalist who returned!

Please by all means enjoy this third installment fully crammed with the charms of the ever-serious and clumsy (and surprisingly big breasted) Ellis!

And at this point, big news came flying over from my person-in-charge Shouji-san!

Receiving everyone's popularity, Seirei Tsukai had promising sales but—

What! The serialization of a comic edition has been decided in "Monthly Comic-Alive"!

The one drawing "Seirei" of the comic edition is Yoshihira Zenzai-sensei. I was shown the character designs the other day, but... they're dangerous, they're transcendently adorable!

The reason we could develop a media mix this early was because of all you readers, who had supported " Seirei". Please be looking forward to the day that Claire and Est get turned into a comic and move about.

It's time for the thanks. First, to Sakura Hanpen-sensei, thank you very much for this time's wonderful illustration too. Especially, the front cover's Ellis is most cute. Black tights are the best. And, as to why her breastplate is opened—that's an eternal puzzle, an eternal mystery, and an eternal romance!

To MFJ's charismatic Incubator Koto Shouji-sama, who had always warmly watched over the growth of my work, thank you very much for this time as well & sorry to troubled you—

And again, with Korie Riko-sensei, who's in-charge of the illustration of Gotou Yuujin-sensei's heartwarming, guardian spirit, romance comedy "Tsuki Tsuki!" that was sold at the same time as "Seirei", the drawing of supportive collaborative illustrations could be done. Korie-sensei, thank you very much. As "Tsuki Tsuki!" is a very interesting work filled with plenty of cute girls (Shimizu is of the Gogyou-san faction!), those who have

not read it please read it by all means. —By the way, Sakura Hanpen-sensei's collaborative illustrations seem to be placed on "Tsuki Tsuki" Volume 3!

Chief editor Misaka, proofreading team, binding team, sales teams and the bookstores, really thank you for everything. Again, the new retailers Anibro Gamers had continued from the first volume, even the second volume of deploying extra-large signboards & blade dance roadshow.

And, of course, the greatest thanks go to all you readers who had read this book.

To everyone that sent in their questionnaires, I've read them repeatedly, always treasuring your thoughts. The questionnaires are the driving force for me to write my manuscripts, I'll be happy if you keep on sending them in !

Digressing but when I opened the cash register at a part-time job (a certain bookshop) the other day, there was a customer who bought "Seirei", and it got my heart beating super-fast…!

The next one will be the fourth installment. The stage will be from the academy compilation (first section) to

the Blade Dance compilation (second section)— as for the second section, I plan to make many of the foreshadowing and mysteries clear. Of course, with my " increased love, double the fun, superior battles!" slogan, the battle of love between the beautiful girls will heat up more than anything you've seen before!

At last, I pray that the entertainment that'll be created from now onwards would slightly bring peace to everyone, who're even now in harsh circumstances—

P.S.

Last April, I received news of Matsuno Akinari-sensei's death, and I'm humbly expressing my feelings of condolences.

Thank you very much for many of your wonderful works that brought a smile out from the bottom of my heart.

April 2011, Shimizu Yuu

Illustrator's

Nice to meet you, or perhaps, long time no see, this is Sakura Hanpen!

This time I'm given two pages for my afterword, so I've fully used the space.

And drew Ellis-san!

Ellis in the 3rd volume was too cute that it was excruciating.

Even I, who's of the Rinslet faction, was almost bought over, how dangerous.

Then, here's some pleasant news! What, the series has been serialized as a manga!

The beginning of first serialization following my first light novel illustrations in succession has me very happy!

The manga drawings are really cute, oh-no, it's at a level that I want to Shizumi-sensei's pero-pero right on the manga edition.

No, it'll be a waste, so I'll hold to it, Shizumi-sensei's pero-pero right is really cute, so please really look forward to it! I want to quickly read it.

Well then, I'll stop here!

The next volume seems to be a book of personal benefit to me!

Shizumi-sensei, I'm looking forward to it! Thank you!!

Before Koto Shouji-san deprives me of my pero-pero rights, I'll be stopping here!! See you at the next volume!

References and Translation Notes

1. ↑ The japanese term for an elder sister. However, this term also carries a **great** amount of respect and thus, cannot be fully translated. Therefore, it has been left as is. For more details see Japanese honorifics.
2. ↑ In japan, there exists a high level seductive technique called the naked apron, which is basically wearing nothing but a simple apron. Naked knee-socks is the knee-socks variant of that, in which one doesn't wear anything but knee-socks.
3. ↑ Paella is a Valencia dish consisting of rice with the addition of meat, vegetables or seafood.
4. ↑ Nyotaimori (Japanese: 女, "female body presentation"), often referred to as "body sushi", is the practice of serving sashimi or sushi from the body of a woman
5. ↑ A highly honorable term for one's older sister. This term of referring to one's older sister carries an extreme amount of respect that cannot be properly converted to English. Thus it has been left as is.
6. ↑ A sound made when someone is slightly annoyed .
7. ↑ sound of waterdrops